



Month 6: Developing Hands and Fingers

Toddler

Finger Painting

Using only their fingers, have the children paint a picture or draw specific shapes with nothing but their hands. Simple shapes like circles, vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines, and scribbles could be drawn.

Exploring Lids

Choose a variety of containers with lids that your child can practice taking off and putting back on: Plastic food and cosmetic containers, cleaned detergent bottles, cans and pots with knobbed lids. Tuck small surprises into the containers (ball, small car, cracker, piece of cheese or fruit, empty spools) to encourage the child to look inside.

Building Blocks

Give your toddler boxes, sponges, blocks and empty cans of various sizes to stack, balance and match to make a structure. Praise her when she tries to build with these objects.

Play-Dough

Enjoy this activity with your child and encourage her to explore! Show your child how to poke, roll, and press the play-dough using their hands, fingers, cookie cutters, or popsicle sticks. You could even use children's scissors to teach your child how to snip small pieces from the play-dough. This can also be a great time to practice using plastic utensils, showing your child how to stab small pieces of play-dough with her fork, cutting small pieces with a knife or scooping them up with her spoon.

Dressing up!

Kids love to play dress-up and not only does this lead to great imaginations, it can also lead to strengthening of arms, hands and fingers as children work to dress themselves and manage all the fasteners. Have larger fitting clothes or costumes available and take the time to teach your child how to engage and pull up a zipper, snap snaps, to do up and un-do buttons. It is even appropriate to introduce early tying skills. Just encourage your child to try after you've taken the time to show them. Provide as much assistance as they need to be successful and praise their efforts! These dressing skills

can also be practiced as children try to dress their dolls, and you can ask them help you dress younger siblings.

Turtle – fingerplay

This is a turtle (make a fist)

He lives in a shell.

He likes his home,

Very, very, well.

He pokes his head out when he wants something to eat

(stick out thumb from fist)

And puts it back in when he goes to sleep (fold them into fist again)

Thumbs Up Please

Sitting with your child ask them to listen to your questions. Explain that their thumbs not their voices will answer the questions. If the answer is yes then it's THUMBS UP, if the answer is no then it's THUMBS DOWN. Some examples are:

"Do you like ice cream?"

"Do you like to play outside?"

"Does a cow give juice?"

References:

Invest in Kids Foundation. (2001). What a child will be depends on you and me: A resource kit for a child's first five years. Toronto (ON): Invest in Kids Foundation.

SPARC: Sports and Recreation New Zealand (2008). Developing hands and fingers. Active Movement.