

Using My Small Muscles: Ages 5-Kindergarten

Helping your child strengthen the small muscles in their hands will:

- Prepare them for all the cutting, writing, coloring, and zipping they will do in kindergarten.



Ideas to try with your child:

- Keep paper, markers or crayons around the house for your child to:
 - Write letters or words in grocery lists, letters to grandma, etc.
 - Draw pictures
- Have your child use scissors to:
 - Cut rolled play dough into little pieces
 - Make their own puzzles by cutting on thick lines and curves that are drawn on paper or cereal boxes
- Remind your child to hold scissors correctly: thumbs up, elbows in!

If your child is struggling:

- Remind them that learning to do new things takes practice.
- Stay close to your child when he or she is trying something difficult.
- Set up games for your child to use their fingers
 - Moving cotton balls or other small items from one container to another.
 - Use clothes pins or tweezers to move things

Going further:

- Give your child an opportunity to put paper clips on paper, place coins into a slot, pinch things with spring type clothespins, or use a hole punch.
- Using small strips of paper, have your child label toys and household items (chair, microwave, door) and attach the label with tape.
- Cut out pictures from coloring books to make their own puppets.
- iPad apps: Dexterity Jr. & Letter School (These apps help with using the eyes and hands together to trace, pinch, and tap.)
- Give your child an opportunity to draw or write with things other than a pencil and paper:
 - Draw in the dirt with a stick
 - Write and draw in sand or salt on a cookie sheet
 - Use fingers or paintbrushes to draw or write in shaving cream on the table



The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children's best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children of Kindergarten age** that parents can help improve at home.

Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: "Use the hands and fingers in a variety of ways." *Touching, Seeing, Hearing, and Moving Around, Ages 5-Kindergarten*, pg. 90