

What are fine motor skills?

Fine motor skills are movements that we do with our fingers and hands. Fine motor skills:

- Are signs that your baby or toddler is developing skills with their fingers and hands.
- Follow certain patterns and stages for most children.
- May happen at slightly different times for each child.

What fine motor skills should my child have?

Some key fine motor skills that are usual for babies and toddlers are listed in the chart below. If you are concerned about your child's fine motor skills, talk with your child's doctor. You may also call the Occupational Therapy (OT) department at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

Child's age	Usual fine motor skills
Birth to 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brings hands to mouth• Turns head to follow objects• Bats or swipes at toys with arms• Opens and shuts hands• Watches faces• Holds rattle when placed in hand
6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reaches for objects with both hands and 1 hand• Holds and shakes toys• Holds own bottle• Moves eyes to follow objects• Keeps hands open most of the time
9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begins to pick up smaller objects with fingers• Bangs objects on a table• Moves objects from 1 hand to the other• Points with index (pointer) finger
12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bangs objects together• Puts objects in a container• Begins to scribble with crayons• Holds small items between their thumb and pointer finger

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Fine motor skills, continued

Child's age	Usual fine motor skills
18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Builds a tower with 3 to 4 blocks• Holds a marker with a fist using all 5 fingers• Turns pages of a board book
2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scribbles in circles when drawing• Begins to fold paper• Builds a tower with 6 blocks• Opens doors• Cuts with scissors• Begins to sort items by shape or color
3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses a fork or spoon• Begins to copy circles and lines when drawing• Strings large beads• Builds a tower with 10 blocks• Holds crayon with all fingers pointing towards the paper
4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holds crayons or pencils between thumb and pointer finger correctly• Opens and closes large buttons• Draws circles, squares and plus signs• Begins to trace and copy letters• Cuts simple shapes with scissors

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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