



Quick Guide

Independence Through Assistive Technology

Fine Motor

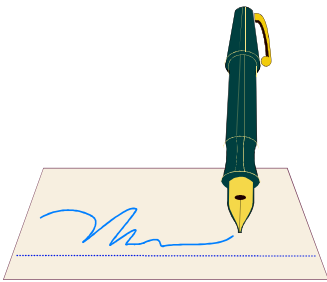
Fine motor refers to the use of hands and arms for small movements, control and coordination. The ability to grasp and release, and manipulate toys and objects increases a child's ability to explore and interact with the environment. This ability is essential to the development of physical strength of the arm and hand muscles, learning, socialization, participation and independent functioning. For children who are unable to control their hands and arms due to physical or neurological problems, there is equipment to improve these skills and increase their ability to play with toys and interact with objects in the environment. This equipment is called *Assistive Technology (AT)*.



How can assistive technology help improve children's fine motor skills?

For grasping:

- “universal cuffs” or built up handles may improve the ability to hold things
- applying knobs or handles to toy pieces may improve ability to hold these toys



For manipulation:

- battery operated toys can be turned on by pushing a large “switch” instead of a tiny button
- small parts of toys can be made bigger
- toys can be secured to a table top so they don't slide away

When To Consider Using AT to Develop Fine Motor Skills?

There may be many reasons why children are unable to grasp and manipulate things at a level that is typical for their age. These reasons should be determined by a physician and an occupational therapist. Consider using assistive technology for development of fine motor skills when:

- children have trouble playing with toys or manipulating objects;
- children are frustrated by not being able to play with and manipulate toys;
- children have trouble manipulating and using tools with their hands (e.g., crayons, pencils, scissors, utensils).





Resources

If you have concerns about a child's fine motor development:

- a physician with specialization in neurology, orthopedics, physical medicine, or rehabilitation may provide assessment or medical intervention.
- a physical or occupational therapist should be contacted to evaluate the child's fine motor skills;
- most schools have occupational therapists who are part of the Statewide Assistive, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (SWAAAC) teams that can provide information about AT related to fine motor development; contact a local school occupational therapist, school principal, district administrator, or the Colorado Department of Education at (303) 866-6600 to locate these resources.
- contact the Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs (HCP) at 1-800-866-7689 or 303-692-2370, or call your local public health department and ask for HCP.

If a child is under three years of age:

- contact Early Childhood Connections at 1-888-777-4041 (toll free), or the Colorado Department of Education (Early Childhood) at (303) 866-6782 and ask for the Part C Coordinator in your area.

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