



These are simple and playful activities to help develop your child's fine motor skills.

Developmental Milestones for Children from 9 to 18 Months:

- Able to do tip-to-tip (index finger and thumb) pinching
- Able to hold a pencil or crayon, not an adult grasp
- Holds paper with hand while drawing
- Uses hand to draw on piece of paper

Ages: 9 - 12 Months

Activities:

- Finger painting without the mess
You will need tape, a large freezer bag, and washable finger paint. Carefully, add a very small amount of paint into the baggy. Seal and tape the baggy shut so the paint doesn't leak out.

Evenly pat and spread the paint in the bag. Lay the baggy flat on the floor or table and have your child draw with his or her fingers on the baggy. The paint will separate where he or she places their fingers and a masterpiece will appear.

- Bucket drop
Take a container from in your home. You can use a plastic food storage container or a small bucket like container.

Give your child small objects or toys to drop into the container one by one. Wooden blocks work great for this kind of activity.

- Opening cabinets
Go into your kitchen and have your child safely open a drawer or cabinet to improve dexterity. You could even have a special cabinet with toys in it so they can safely explore and practice opening and closing the door. Be careful of pinching fingers.

Ages: 12 - 18 Months

Activities:

- Drawing
Give your child a crayon and a piece of paper and have him or her hold the piece of paper with one hand and draw with the other hand.

Use larger crayons for an easier grip. Progress to regular size crayons as they develop their fine motor skills.

- Play dough draw
Flatten play dough on a hard surface in front of your child. Hand your child a wooden spoon and have him or her hold it upside down. Allow them to "draw" pictures in the play dough with the handle end of the spoon.

Have your child point his or her index finger and poke the play dough. Assist in isolating the index finger from the rest of their fingers if needed. Have your child pinch the play dough using their index finger and thumb too.

Variations: Use shapes to trace around or indent images into the play dough for him or her to trace with the spoon.

(Make sure to supervise your child closely. You can use edible play dough instead of store bought.)

Resources:

Developmental milestones from Voress, J. K. & Pearson, N. A. (2013). Early childhood development chart (3rd edition).

www.parents.com www.pathways.org teachinglittleones.com