**Fine Motor Activities to try at home**

Below are some suggested activities to improve fine motor skills and hand/finger muscle strength. Feel free to search for other ideas/activities online or speak to your child’s class teacher for more information.

**Clay, therapy putty, Silly putty, play-doh, bread dough, modelling foam etc**

These are all excellent materials for squeezing, squishing, pushing, pulling and moulding

* Try hiding small objects (beads, pennies, beans) inside and then try pulling them out
* Use a rolling pin to flatten it out, then use cookie cutters to make shapes
* Try rolling dough into sausages, cutting into small pieces and then rolling to make ‘peas’

**Interlocking construction toys**

* Lego’s, Tinker toys and K'nex
* Threading beads, Hama beads (you can get larger versions of these)
* Linking chains

**Water play with spray bottles, water guns, squirt toys, sponges**

* Spray bottles: help water plants or spray the windows to clean, play with it in the bath, play outdoors in warm weather, add food colouring to make spray bottle pictures in the snow.
* Water guns and squirt toys: outdoor summer fun as well as in the bath.
* Sponges: squeezing to wring out the water is great for strengthening hands and forearms.  Help wash the car, wash toys and dolls in the sink or bath, squeeze sponges on your friends during water play outdoors, bring a bucket filled with water and
sponges to cool off on a hot day when on picnics, football games and other outings.

**Clothespin games:**

* Use the *pads of the thumb and index finger* to open the clothespin rather than pinching it open against the side of the index finger
* When pinching open, try alternating each finger to squeeze opposite the thumb.
* Place clothespins along the top of a container and then on top of each other to construct a design.
* Pick up small objects with the clothespin: cotton balls, pompoms,crumbled paper, beads, pegs, etc.
* Attach several clothespins along the bottom hem of shirt and then pull them off.
* Place clothespins around an index card
* Hang up pictures or plush toys on a string, like a clothesline.

**Hole puncher:**

* Punch holes along strips of paper (1 to 2 inches wide) or along the edges of a sheet of paper or paper plate.
* Use hole punch clippings to make confetti or 'snow' to glue on paper for pictures

**Bubble Wrap**

* Pop the bubbles on large or small bubble wrap by pinching with thumb and index finger or by pushing down on bubbles when sheet is placed on a hard surface.

**Squeeze toys and materials**

* Foam balls, animals and shapes
* Tennis ball "Hungry Guy" cut a slit into a tennis ball - when you squeeze the ball the mouth will open.  Hide pennies, pegs, beads and other small things inside.  Squeeze to open and shake out the contents, then feed the "hungry guy" by slipping in the "food".  The wider
the slit, the easier it will be to open the mouth wide.  Start with a wide slit for young children.
* Bulb syringe (usually in infant supply sections of shops) or turkey baster to squirt water, or have a race by squeezing them to blow cotton balls and pompoms across a finish line.
* Craft activities that require using bottles to squeeze: glue, glitter glue, puffy paint, fabric paint, etc.

**Pinch strengthening**

* Tongs, tweezers, connected chop sticks, strawberry hullers:  use these to pick up small objects for sorting, such as beads, marbles, beans, pompoms and cotton balls.
* Push a toothpick point into a Styrofoam tray or plate, or in aluminium foil placed over craft foam or corkboard to make a picture.
* Dress up dolls: requires a surprising amount of hand strength and endurance