

Lesson Plan: Fine Motor Fun Fair!

Subject: Pre-Handwriting / Fine Motor Skills

Student: Ollie (Age 5)

Goal: To strengthen the small muscles in the hands and fingers needed for writing through fun, engaging, and creative play—no pencils required!

Materials Needed

- Playdough (store-bought or homemade)
 - An ice cube tray or an empty egg carton
 - Small items for sorting: pom-poms, large buttons, or dry pasta shapes
 - Child-safe tweezers or small tongs
 - String, a shoelace, or a pipe cleaner
 - Beads with large holes (like pony beads) or cut-up pieces of a paper straw
 - A small tray or mat to define the workspace
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Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Ollie will be able to:

- Demonstrate a developing pincer grasp (using thumb and forefinger) to pick up small objects.
- Manipulate playdough by rolling, pinching, and squeezing it to create simple shapes.
- Show improved hand-eye coordination by successfully threading at least five items onto a string or pipe cleaner.

Alignment with Early Learning Standards (Example: EYFS Framework)

- **Physical Development:** Fine Motor Skills - Using a range of small tools, including tweezers. Using hands to create with malleable materials.
 - **Expressive Arts and Design:** Creating with Materials - Exploring and experimenting with a range of media (playdough).
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Lesson Procedure

Introduction: "Welcome to the Fun Fair!" (5 minutes)

1. **Set the Scene:** Announce, "Welcome, Ollie, to the fantastic Fine Motor Fun Fair! Today, we don't need pencils or paper. We are going to train our fingers to be super strong and nimble by playing some fun fair games!"
 2. **Finger Warm-up:** Do some "finger gymnastics."
 - Wiggle all ten fingers like they are dancing.
 - Make your fingers "walk" across the table.
 - Open and close your hands slowly, then quickly.
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- Touch your thumb to each fingertip on the same hand, one by one, like a little spider doing push-ups.

Activity 1: The Pom-Pom Prize Stall (10 minutes)

1. **The Goal:** "At this stall, your job is to move all the colorful prizes (pom-poms) into their special display case (the ice cube tray)!"
2. **How to Play:**
 - Place a pile of pom-poms next to the empty ice cube tray.
 - **Level 1 (Pincer Grasp):** Encourage Ollie to use only his "pincher fingers" (thumb and index finger) to pick up one pom-pom at a time and place it into a slot in the tray.
 - **Level 2 (Tool Time):** Introduce the child-safe tweezers or small tongs. Show him how to squeeze them to pick up a pom-pom and release it into a slot. This builds a different set of muscles crucial for pencil control.
3. **Teacher's Focus:** Observe which fingers he naturally uses. Gently guide him toward the pincer grasp if he's using his whole hand. Praise his effort and concentration.

Activity 2: The Playdough Sculpture Garden (10-15 minutes)

1. **The Goal:** "Now we're at the sculpture garden! Let's use this special clay (playdough) to make amazing things."
2. **How to Play:**
 - **Roll Snakes:** Show Ollie how to roll the playdough on the mat or between his palms to make long snakes. This strengthens the whole hand and arches.
 - **Pinch & Pull:** Encourage him to pinch off small pieces of the "snake." Pinching is a key fine motor action.
 - **Roll Balls:** Show him how to take a small piece and roll it into a ball using his palms or just his fingertips.
 - **Squash & Flatten:** Have him flatten the balls into "pancakes" using the palm of his hand or just his thumb.
3. **Creative Challenge:** "Can you make a snail by coiling up a snake? Can you make a caterpillar by lining up some small balls?"

Activity 3: The Bead Race (10 minutes)

1. **The Goal:** "This is the final event—the bead race! Let's see how quickly we can get these beads onto the racetrack (the string)."
2. **How to Play:**
 - Give Ollie the string, shoelace, or pipe cleaner. A pipe cleaner is stiffer and easier for beginners. A shoelace with a plastic tip is a good middle ground.
 - Place the beads in a small bowl.
 - Ollie should hold the pipe cleaner in one hand and use the pincer grasp of his other hand to pick up a bead and thread it on.
3. **Teacher's Focus:** This activity requires both hands to work together (bilateral coordination). Notice how he coordinates his hands. Celebrate each successful bead!

Closure and Assessment

"Fun Fair Wrap-Up" (5 minutes)

1. **Show and Tell:** Ask Ollie to show you his favorite creation from the "Fun Fair." Was it his sorted pom-poms, a playdough sculpture, or his beaded string? Talk about what was fun and what was tricky.
2. **Muscle Check:** Ask him, "Do your fingers feel stronger now? Let's give them a final wiggle to

say thank you for all their hard work!"

3. **Formative Assessment (Observation):** During the lesson, you have informally assessed his progress. Ask yourself:
- Was he able to isolate his thumb and forefinger for the pincer grasp?
 - Could he apply varied pressure to the playdough (rolling vs. squashing)?
 - Did his hand-eye coordination improve during the beading activity?
 - Most importantly, was he engaged and enjoying the process?

Differentiation and Extension

- **For Extra Support:** If Ollie finds an activity too challenging, simplify it. Use larger pom-poms or beads. Use very soft playdough. Let him use his whole hand initially and gradually encourage finger use. Use tongs instead of tweezers.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** If Ollie masters the activities, increase the difficulty. Use smaller beads or pom-poms. Introduce tweezers that require more control. Ask him to make patterns with the beads (e.g., red, blue, red, blue). Challenge him to create more complex playdough figures like a person or a dinosaur.