

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

Fine Motor Skills (colouring, cutting, beading, lego, drawing)

“Fine motor” refers to the movements we make with the small muscles of the hands. Children start to use their hands right at birth to explore their own bodies and the world around them. Their fine motor skills develop as their whole body starts to move and become more stable. They also learn to do more things with their hands as their cognitive and social/emotional skills improve.

Below are some of the typical developmental milestones for fine motor skills. After each age group, you can find some “red flags” that might indicate a problem.

Between the ages of 3-4 years, your child will:

- Build a tower of 9-10 small blocks
- Use playdough to make balls, snakes, cookies, etc.
- Build things with large linking blocks, such as Megablocks or Duplo
- Draw a circle by herself
- Copy a cross (+)
- Imitate you drawing a square
- Start to hold a crayon or pencil with a mature grasp (like an adult)
- Cut across a piece of paper
- Start to cut along a straight line
- Manage buttons
- Put on most items of clothing by herself, but may still need help with shirts and jackets
- Feed himself well with a spoon and fork

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (4 years)

If you notice some of the following things about your child by the time he is 4 years old, you may want to talk to your doctor, or to another health professional such as an [occupational therapist](#).

- His movements seem shaky or stiff
- Her arms and hands seem very weak
- She is not able to cut across a piece of paper with scissors
- He cannot copy a cross (+)
- She is not able to draw a circle and straight lines by herself
- She cannot string ½ inch beads onto a lace
- He cannot use a fork and spoon well
- She is not able to put on her own pants, loose socks and shoes

Between the ages of 4-5 years, your child will:

- Start to use one hand consistently for fine motor tasks
- Cut along a straight line with scissors
- Start to cut along a curved line, like a circle
- Draw a cross by herself (+)
- Copy a square
- Begin to draw diagonal lines, like in a triangle
- Start to color inside the lines of a picture
- Start to draw pictures that are recognizable
- Build things with smaller linking blocks, such as Duplo or Lego
- Put on his own clothing, but may still need help with fasteners like buttons/zippers
- Start to spread butter or cut soft foods with a small table knife (with supervision)
- Start to learn to print some capital letters

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (5 years)

If you notice some of the following things about your child by the time she is 5 years old, you may want to talk to your doctor, or to another health professional such as an [occupational therapist](#).

- His movements seem shaky or stiff
- Her arms and hands seem very weak
- He is not able to cut along a straight line
- She is not holding her crayons or pencils with her thumb and fingers
- He is not able to draw a circle, square and cross (+)

- She is not able to put on her own shirts, pants, socks, and shoes (with some help with fasteners)
- He is not able to feed himself well with a spoon and fork

<http://www.kamloopschildrenstherapy.org/fine-motor-skills-preschool-milestones>