

# Fine-Motor Fun & Games

Doodle, draw, snip, snap, print! Little fingers need to be strong and coordinated to accomplish all the jobs they do. Here are activities and games designed to get your youngster's muscles ready for writing and other fine-motor tasks.



## Shoelace jewelry

Your child can design colorful bracelets, necklaces, and more to practice grasping and manipulating tiny objects.

First, make a knot in one end of a shoelace. Next, let your youngster slide beads or colored cereal rings onto the shoelace in a pattern.

*Example:* red, yellow, purple, red, yellow, purple. When she's finished, tie the ends of the shoelace together. She could wear her jewelry—or give it to someone else as a gift!



## Greedy gators

Whose alligator will grab the most cotton balls? This fast-paced game uses tweezers to strengthen your child's fingers. Each player needs an "alligator" (tweezers or tongs), a cup containing a dozen cotton balls or pompoms, and an empty cup. On the count of 3, everyone races to transfer their cotton balls to their empty cup, one at a time, using only their "gators." If you drop a cotton ball, your alligator must retrieve it. The first player to transfer all of his cotton balls wins. Once your youngster has mastered the game, replace the cotton balls with objects that aren't so squishy and easy to grasp, such as pins or buttons.

## Tin-can wrap

Combine a finger workout with counting. Close your eyes while your child wraps several rubber bands around a tin can. She should bunch and overlap them to disguise how many she used. Then, you estimate how many bands are on the can. Have her check your estimate by pulling them off the can and counting them. Now you wrap rubber bands around the can, and let her estimate, unweave, and count.

## Hair salon

Your youngster will get experience using scissors as he gives haircuts to these cardboard cutters. Ask him to draw funny faces on the bottom half of several toilet-tissue tubes. He might choose to make each tube a different animal, monster, or person. Then, cut the top half of each tube into narrow strips to make "hair." Your child can use safety scissors to cut and style his inanimate creature's hair.

