

Neat Pincer Grasp

What is a neat pincer grasp?

When the tip of the thumb and the tip of the pointer finger work together to pick up and hold objects.

What does a neat pincer grasp look like?

When the tip of the thumb and the tip of the pointer finger touch together. Think about the “OK” sign when your thumb and pointer finger touch and make a nice round “O”.



When should my child develop a neat pincer grasp?

This is typically developed between 10 and 12 months old.

What is a neat pincer grasp used for?

- Picking up small objects
- Self-feeding
- Playing with toys
- Developing fine motor skills needed for activities later in life such as dressing and handwriting.

Home Activities to Help Develop a Neat Pincer Grasp

Place small pieces of food into a container

- Use small food items such as Cheerios or Puffs.
- Use a container such as an ice cube tray or an old egg carton.
- Have your child pick up the pieces of food one at a time and place them into the container.
- Encourage your child to use their thumb and index finger when picking up the food.



Play with clothespins or chip clips

- Give your child clothespins or chip clips to strengthen the muscles in their hands.
- They can place the clothespins or chip clips onto different surfaces such as paper, cardboard boxes, blankets, or anything else you may have.
- They can also pick up small items such as cotton balls with them.
- Be careful to make sure your child is safe when using these so they do not get little fingers caught.



Place items through the holes in a strainer

- Use the strainer from your kitchen.
- Give your child objects that will fit through the small holes in the strainer such as spaghetti noodles (the noodles can be uncooked or cooked), pipe cleaners, or any other thin and long objects that may fit.
- Have your child place these objects through the holes in the strainer.
- Encourage your child to use their thumb and index finger when picking up the objects and placing them through the holes.



Play with tape

- Let your child peel and stick tape on the floor, tray, or any surfaces you allow them to.
- Encourage your child to use their thumb and index finger during this activity.



Q-Tip and egg carton activity

- Gather some Q-Tips.
- Poke small holes on the bottom of the egg carton.
- Have your child place the Q-Tips in the holes.
- Encourage your child to use their thumb and index finger when holding the Q-Tips.



Q-Tip and cardboard activity

- Gather some Q-Tips and cut them in half.
- Gather a piece of cardboard (this can be from an old box).
- Use a marker or pen to draw on the piece of cardboard – you can create different designs or spell out words or names.
- Poke small holes over your design.
- Have your child place the Q-Tips in the holes.
- Encourage your child to use their thumb and index finger when holding the Q-Tips.



Make cereal jewelry

- Use cereal with holes in the middle such as Cheerios, Froot Loops, or Apple Jacks.
- Use a string or clean shoelace.
- Have your child place the cereal onto the string or shoelace.
- Encourage your child to use their thumb and index finger when picking up the cereal and placing it on the string or shoelace.
- Once your child is finished, tie it for them and allow them to safely wear it as a necklace or bracelet.



Play with cotton balls

- Gather cotton balls.
- Use a container – this can be an empty egg crate, muffin tin, Tupperware container, ice cube tray, or any cardboard boxes.
- Have your child place the cotton balls into the container.
- Encourage your child to use their thumb and index finger when picking up the cotton balls.



Reminder: Please be sure to supervise children at all times during these activities, as playing with small objects can be a choking hazard!

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