

Finger Isolation

What is finger isolation?

- The ability to move each finger one at a time.

What are some examples of finger isolation?

- Pointing with the index finger
- Counting one finger at a time
- Wiggling all the fingers
- Typing on a keyboard
- Scrolling on a smart phone or tablet



Why is finger isolation important?

- It is a part of fine motor development, which is the ability to move the small muscles in the hands and wrists.
- It contributes to completing skills such as:
 - Picking up small items
 - Developing a proper pencil grasp
 - Typing on a keyboard
 - Playing musical instruments
 - Tying shoelaces
 - And many other daily activities

When should my child start to complete these skills?

- Finger isolation can begin around 6 months old, when a child starts to pick up small objects.
- Poke with index finger between 9 and 12 months old.
- Point with index finger between 12 and 16 months old.

Home Activities for Finger Isolation

Play with Bubble Wrap

- Save bubble wrap for your child to play with.
- Let your child pop the bubbles.
- You can even paint the bubbles different colors to work on learning colors as well.
- Or try writing letters or numbers on the bubbles to work on learning the alphabet and counting.
- Encourage your child to use their pointer finger to pop the bubbles during this activity.



Finger Painting

- Use cardboard, paper/newspaper, or anything you want to paint on.
- If you don't have paint, try using shaving cream, gel, cool whip, pudding, yogurt, water, or make your own homemade paint. Remember, you can use food coloring to make different colors with these materials.
- To make homemade paint, blend $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of flour with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of salt. Then add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water. Mix until smooth. Add food coloring for different colors.
- Encourage your child to use their fingers, especially their pointer finger, to paint with.
- This is also a great way to explore messy play!



I Spy Sensory Bags

- Sensory bags are bags filled with different items to engage your child's senses of touch and sight.
- Use Ziploc bags to create a sensory bag.
- Choose different fillers to put in the sensory bags such as:
 - Dry pasta
 - Popcorn kernels
 - Rice or sprinkles
 - Cereal or chips
 - Water
 - Hair gel or shampoo
 - Shaving cream
 - Baby oil
 - Beads or buttons
 - Cotton balls
 - Small erasers
 - Rubber bands
 - Crayons
 - Bottle caps or pouch tops
 - Paperclips
 - Or any other small items
- After placing items in the Ziploc bag, zip it shut and use duct tape around the edges. Cover all four edges with tape, folding over the edge to help strengthen the bag. To prevent any holes or leaks in the bag, you can use two Ziploc bags and then tape the edges.
- Play I Spy to find the different items in the sensory bag.
- Encourage your child to move items around with their fingers and point to an object with their pointer finger when they find it.



Container Play

- Use an empty bottle or container for this activity.
- Use the opening or holes of the bottle or container or cut out your own holes.
- Find objects to fit into the openings such as cotton balls, pom poms, coins, buttons, toothpicks, Q-tips, pipe cleaners, straws, wine corks, or anything else you may have in your house.
- Encourage your child to isolate their fingers and use their pointer finger to push down on the object to place it into the container or bottle.



Play with Chip Clips or Clothespins

- Allow your child to play with chip clips or clothespins.
- Have your child open and close them and even place them on the rim of a container, on a piece of paper, or any other surface. You can even try to pick up small items with them.
- Encourage your child to use their pointer finger and thumb to work on isolating those fingers.



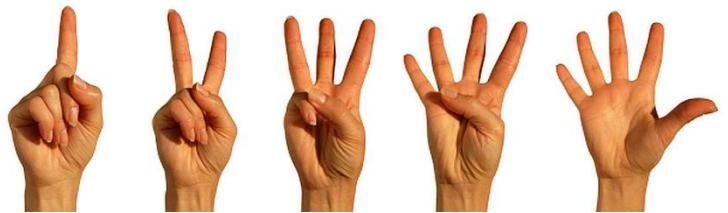
Finger Puppets

- Make your own finger puppets by using materials in your home.
- Cut off the fingertips of gloves, or use pieces of paper, cloth, or other fabrics.
- Draw faces on the material to make a puppet.
- Encourage your child to play along with the puppets.



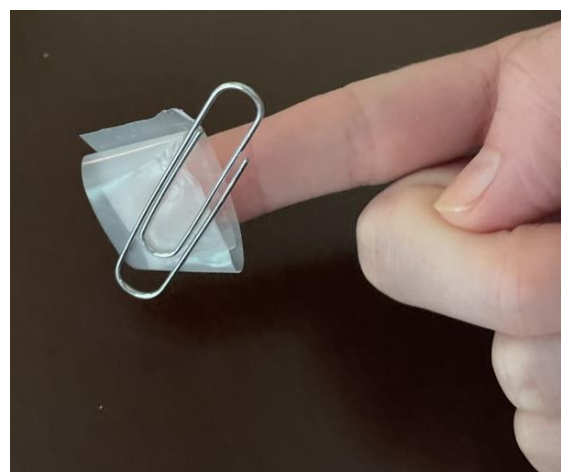
Count Fingers

- Counting on fingers is an easy way to practice finger isolation.
- Look for items around your house to count or just practice counting on your own.



Lizard Fingers

- Place tape on the fingers so that the sticky side is facing out.
- Have your child pretend to be a lizard by picking up small items around the house using the tape on their fingers.
- Make sure the items are small and lightweight so they can be picked up by the tape. Some suggestions are small pieces of paper or hole punch cut outs, beads, buttons, cereal, paper clips, cotton balls, buttons, or anything else you may have.



Finger Soccer

- Similar to paper football, try playing finger soccer with your child.
- Make an area that is a goal and use an item for a soccer ball. This can be a crumbled-up piece of paper or foil, a ping pong ball, round bead, cotton ball, or anything else you can think of.
- Encourage your child to use their finger to flick and hit the ball into the goal.

Play with Spray Bottles

- Allow your child to play with spray bottles.
- Remember, if you clean out empty bottles of cleaner or soap very well, you can even use those for spray bottles.
- Fill the bottles up with water and let your child spray the sink, bathtub, outside area, or anywhere else you allow them to.
- Encourage your child to work on finger isolation and using their pointer finger to pull back and spray the bottle.



Rip Paper

- If you have any scrap paper such as newspapers or magazines, give it to your child.
- Allow them to rip the paper up into smaller pieces.
- Encourage your child to try and use their pointer finger and thumb to rip the paper.
- This is a great activity to strengthen the muscles in the hands and fingers while also working on using the pointer finger and thumb together.



Play with Play Dough

- If you don't have any at home, try using these ingredients to make your own batch!
 - 1 cup of flour
 - ¼ cup of salt
 - 1 teaspoon of cream of tartar
 - ½ tablespoon of vegetable oil
 - ½ cup of boiling water
 - Food coloring (15-20 drops for darker colors)
- Directions:
 - Whisk the flour, salt, and cream of tartar.
 - Make a small hole in the center and add the vegetable oil, boiling water, and food coloring.
 - Stir until the dough forms.
 - If the playdough feels runny or sticky, allow it to sit for a few minutes. If it still feels runny or sticky add a little more flour.
 - When dough is cool, use your hands to soften and form it.
 - Try adding different essential oils, scents, or spices (lavender, cinnamon, soap, etc.) to explore different smells with the playdough.
- When playing with the play dough, encourage your child to do these activities:
 - Roll small balls using just their thumbs and fingers.
 - Pinch the small balls using just their thumbs and fingers.
 - Place the small balls on the table and smash them using their fingers.



Singalong Songs for Finger Isolation

- Try singing some of these songs with your child to work on finger isolation.
- Encourage your child to sing along with you and to also complete the hand motions.

Itsy Bitsy Spider

The itsy bitsy spider climbed up the water spout.
Down came the rain and washed the spider out.
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain.
And the itsy bitsy spider climbed up the spout again.



Where is Thumbkin

Where is Thumbkin? Where is Thumbkin?
Here I am, here I am. How are you today sir?
Very well, I thank you. Run away, run away.



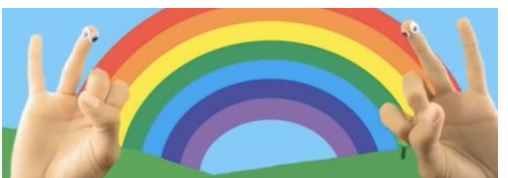
Where is Pointer Where is Pointer?
Here I am, here I am. How are you today sir?
Very well, I thank you. Run away, run away.



Where is Tallman? Where is Tallman?
Here I am, here I am. How are you today sir?
Very well, I thank you. Run away, run away.



Where is Ringman? Where is Ringman?
Here I am, here I am. How are you today sir?
Very well, I thank you. Run away, run away.



Where is Pinkie? Where is Pinkie?
Here I am, here I am. How are you today sir?
Very well, I thank you. Run away, run away.



Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed. One fell off and bumped his head. Mamma called the doctor and the doctor said, no more monkeys jumping on the bed.



Four little monkeys jumping on the bed. One fell off and bumped his head. Mamma called the doctor and the doctor said, no more monkeys jumping on the bed.



Three little monkeys jumping on the bed. One fell off and bumped his head. Mamma called the doctor and the doctor said, no more monkeys jumping on the bed.



Two little monkeys jumping on the bed. One fell off and bumped his head. Mamma called the doctor and the doctor said, no more monkeys jumping on the bed.



One little monkey jumping on the bed. He fell off and bumped his head. Mamma called the doctor and the doctor said, put those monkeys right to bed.



Please be sure to supervise children during these activities. Some of the items in these activities may be a choking hazard or may not be edible.

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