

# Tools for Tiny Hands

## For children ages 2 to 5 and their adults

**This kit is filled with tools and ideas that help your child develop and practice their fine motor skills.**

Fine motor skills are the ability to make small movements with the fingers, hands, and wrists. They are skills that need control and coordination, like writing with a pencil, zipping your jacket, and using a fork.

Fine motor skills are needed for everyday life and for success in school. They help children do more things for themselves. And research shows that when children start school with strong fine motor skills, they are more likely to succeed.

All fine motor skills take time to learn, and it's important to start when children are young. Your child can develop and practice many fine motor skills through play or by helping in your home. Dressing a doll, building with blocks, and cooking with you are all activities that help. Some fine motor skills are learned best by using special tools, like scissors or a paintbrush.



### What's in the Kit

- 10 tools for adults and children to use together
- Lots of materials to use with the tools
- Activity sheets for each tool to give you ideas of what to do



308 Congress Street | Boston, MA 02210 | (617) 426-6500 | [BostonChildrensMuseum.org](http://BostonChildrensMuseum.org)

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## General Tips

- The activities in this kit are for adults and children to do together. **Tools are not toys!** **Make sure you supervise your child.** Children need to learn how to use each tool safely with you by their side.
- **Many children need time to explore** materials before they try an activity. Start by giving small amounts of the materials and just let them play. Maybe start with some straws, yarn, and paper. Then, introduce one tool that is familiar (like the cups) and see what they discover. When you think they are ready, try something from one of the activity sheets.
- **Talk with your child** as you explore the tools and materials together. Share what you notice. Ask them to describe what they are doing. Each activity sheet includes some ideas of things to say.
- **Learning to use tools takes practice.** Children develop skills over time and at their own pace. Your child might not get it right the first time or the tenth time. Demonstrate and give them tips on how to use the tools. But don't do it for them.
- **Children learn by doing the same thing over and over.** You might feel bored because you already know how to do it. But to them it's still an exciting challenge. Encourage them to keep trying.
- The process of using a tool is more important than the product your child creates. **Praise your child for working hard.** Try not to criticize a product that looks messy to your adult eye—it might look beautiful to your child!
- **Follow your child's interests.** The activity sheets suggest ways to use the tools in this kit. But there are plenty of other ways to use them. For example, try water play! Fill a large bowl with a little water (you might want to do this outside or during bath time). Give your child the cups, turkey baster, eye dropper, and more. Scoop. Pour. See what sinks or floats. All of this is fine motor skill practice. Remember that for all water activities, you should supervise your child and empty the water when you're done playing together.

