

Activities to Promote Grasping Skills

1 || Playing with a squirt bottle

2 || **Milking a Cow** – Has your little one ever gotten to milk a cow? Let her try with this imaginative activity that targets hand strength.

3 || Popping bubble wrap

4 || **Playing with playdoh** (rolling big/little balls, poking holes with fingers, pulling apart)

5 || Tearing paper for crafts

6 || **Baby Bumblebee** – A great workout for little hands, this fun song and movement activity will have your little bees buzzing all over the place!

7 || Play with clothespins or tweezers to pick up items

8 || Board games such as **Operation**, memory (flipping cards), **Bed Bugs**, etc. There are many games that use small manipulatives that can enhance hand strength and coordination.

9 || **Sparkly Sensory Starfish** – Kids will put their Super Fingers to the test with this fun ocean-themed activity as they sprinkle decorations on to make a one-of-a-kind starfish!

10 || Stringing beads

11 || Putting pennies into a piggy bank

12 || **Feed the Elephant** – Part of our circus theme, this activity will not only encourage grasp and fine motor coordination, but lots of giggles too!

13 || **Personalized Caterpillars** – A great multi-tasker, this craft gets kids working on fine motor strength AND learning how to sequence the letters of their names!

Hand-strengthening Exercises

Weight Bearing Activities for Kids

1 || Crawling – Try relay races, obstacle courses, and other games.

2 || Donkey kicks – Have the child bend forward to place his hands on the floor and then kick his legs up behind them like a donkey. Try it during a game of **Line Tag!**

3 || Wheelbarrow walks – Have the child place her hands on the floor while you or another child holds her feet. See how far she can walk on her hands. Try a **wheelbarrow relay!**

4 || Yoga for kids – Poses like **downward dog**, table pose, and handstand are great weight bearing poses for kids to try!

5 || Play in All Fours – Try playing board games, coloring, or playing with toys in a crawling position so the child is holding his weight on his hands.

6 || Tummy Time – Here's a great hand strengthener for babies...get them on their tummies! Fun **tummy time toys** help keep things a little more entertaining too!

Squeezing Activities for Kids

21 || Playing with play dough, putty, or clay – Squishing, pinching, rolling, squeezing, smushing – all great for building muscles in the hands!

22 || Sponges – **Get kids involved in chores** where they have to wring out sponges or wet rags – clean house *and* strong hands? Don't mind if we do!

23 || Spray bottles, water guns, squeeze bottles – Have a water fight in the backyard, have kids water your plants with a spray bottle, or try **Erupting Rainbow Sidewalk Chalk Paint** in a squeeze bottle!

24 || Squeeze Balls or **Stretchy Balls** – Use these as fidget toys or challenge kids to do several reps of squeezing or pulling to build strength. Check out this super fun **Feed the Mouth Ball** activity!

25 || Clips and clothespins – Some of the most commonly used materials in my therapy practice! There are a zillion ways to play with clips and clothespins! This fun **Monster Munch Fine Motor Game** is my students' favorite (and mine too)!

26 || Hole Punches – These little hand strengtheners come in all shapes and sizes – great for making **hole punch crafts** with kids!

27 || Scissors – Try cutting against resistance: thicker paper or cardstock, play dough or clay, or check out this **cool idea for practicing scissors** – great for visual motor skills *and* hand strength!

28 || Glue Bottles – Crafting with liquid glue is an easy way to help kids work on hand strength. Try this visual motor and **hand strengthening quick tip**!

29 || Turkey Baster – Squeezing the squishy end of a turkey baster...what could be more fun? Use one to blow pompoms across the table or try a **turkey baster relay**!

30 || Sensory Balloons – Fill balloons with dry rice, beans, flour, or play dough. Have kids squeeze and squish them in their hands to build strength. Check out this fun **Baby Bumblebee Activity**!

31 || Crumpling Paper – We love doing this during handwriting practice. Use smaller pieces of writing paper and have kids write sight words, spelling words, or short sentences on them. Then, crumple up each piece to shoot a basket into the recycling bin!

32 || Bath Toys – Squishy, squeeze toys can make **bath time** even more fun! Especially the ones that squirt water!

33 || Milking a Cow – Don't have a real one? We didn't think so. Try this **fun fine motor strengthening activity** instead – it's one of our most popular activities here at The Inspired Treehouse!

34 || Bubble Wrap – It comes in all different sizes and kids love the sound it makes when they snap it between their fingers. The bubble wrap with the smallest bubbles is best for strengthening those **Super Fingers**, while larger bubble wrap can strengthen the whole hand!

35 || Tongs and Tweezers – Use them to pick up pompoms and other toys, **throw them in a sensory bin**, or use them to pick up blocks to stack into a tower!

Pushing and Pulling Toys and Activities for Kids

7 || Lego or Duplo blocks – Both awesome for developing grasp strength! Smaller Lego bricks are great for older kids with more advanced skills, while the larger Duplo version is best for the younger crowd.

8 || Velcro – Pulling against heavy duty **Velcro** is another great hand strengthener. Try **adapting books using Velcro**, making **file folder games**, or making other fun **velcro fine motor tasks!**

9 || Connecting Beads – These **large beads that pop together** are great for strengthening the larger muscles of the hand and these **pop beads** are a smaller version, great for developing the precision muscles.

10 || Mr. Potato Head – A toddler and preschool favorite, this is a great starter toy for hand strengthening. The pieces are relatively big and easy to grasp and the repetition of changing the faces over and over again is great for strengthening!

11 || Rubber Bands – Kids can stretch and pull against the resistance to create masterpieces on a **geoboard** or try one of these fun **rubber band fine motor activities!** We also love this **rubber band passing game** and this **easy fine motor activity!**

12 || Pegs and Foam Pegboards – This is another great starter activity for young kids working on hand strength. The **foam pegboards** are a little tougher to push the peg into, providing resistance and a great opportunity for strength building!

13 || Tape – Pulling tape off of the roll and/or pulling it off of various surfaces (walls, tables, floors) is a great hand strengthener for kids. Check out these **easy activities for kids using tape!**

14 || Pop Toobs – These things are *awesome*. I've never met a kid who didn't love the cool sound they make and the neat vibrating sensation when you pull them apart and push them together. Play a few rounds of tug of war with these little gems and you've got your hand strengthening in for the day!

15 || Rolling Pins – Grasping, pushing, and rolling with a rolling pin are great ways to strengthen little hands and fingers. Try it on play dough, **bubble wrap**, or during cooking activities!

16 || Theraband – This stretchy stuff is another great "tug of war tool". There are all kinds of ways to pull on it and against it to strengthen hands – kids will be in love!

17 || Squigz – If you don't know about these rad little suckers, you totally need to check them out. They're fun, they're colorful, they make a great little popping noise when you pull them – distracting kids from the fact that they're getting a great hand workout!

18 || Climbing – Climbing on just about anything is awesome for building hand strength in kids. Think ropes, ladders, trees, jungle gyms, any playground equipment, and more!

19 || Tearing paper – Two little hands working together to tear through paper is a simple and fun way to target hand strength.

20 || Cooking with Kids – Kneading dough, stirring batter, scooping, cutting, you name it...if it happens in the kitchen, it's probably a hand strengthener!