

Opening food packages (plain version)

Containers and wrappers need hand and finger strength, hand-eye coordination and concentration.

Practice opening and closing snack pots, yoghurt pots and corners, cereal bars and snack or sandwich bags with your child as often as you can. Choose contents which will be motivating for them to open. This might be opening a container for themselves or for you. Do the first part for them if they do not yet have the skills and let them finish the task.

Gradually do a little less as their skills develop until they are doing it all by themselves. It's helpful to let them rest their arms and hands on the table and check their feet are supported by the floor or another firm surface to provide stability. You could practice over a tray initially to catch escaping food.

Here are some activity ideas if you would like to add in some extra practice using two-handed pinch and pull skills.

For example, you could use stretchy fidget toys like silicone noodles for pinch and pull exercises.

Many other activities also help develop these skills, such as assembling and disassembling construction toys (e.g., Duplo, Lego), and pulling zips on pencil cases.

Helpful activities

Tear small pieces of paper, then progress to card for recycling or craft activities.

Stick 4 cm lengths of masking tape around a non-breakable beaker or pot. Show them how to hold it steady and pull off the tape, rotating the beaker as needed. Use the tape for sticking on paper, creating patterns, or sticking on themselves.

Place crayons and small toys in snack tubs with various openings. Practise opening and closing them. Start with easy lids and progress to more challenging ones.