

Fine Motor and Co-ordination Skills

- Better Life Skills – Dressing and undressing, cleaning teeth, using cutlery etc
- More Independence Skills – Throw and catch, football, computer mouse control etc
- Better engagement, better learning, better life experience, more opportunities...

BI-LATERAL COORDINATION * CROSSING THE MID-LINE

TWO-HANDED TASKS

Important because...

It is vital to the development of using both sides of the body together, such as putting on shoes and socks, writing and cutting.

Children who have difficulty coordinating both sides of their body can have difficulty completing daily living tasks (e.g. dressing), fine motor activities (banging blocks together, stringing beads, buttoning), visual motor tasks (drawing, writing, cutting, catching/ throwing), and gross motor activities (crawling, walking, climbing stairs, riding a bike)

Important to the development of body awareness known as "proprioception".

Crossing the midline refers to the ability to spontaneously cross over the midline of the body during motor completion/ functional tasks - moving one hand, foot, or eye into the space of the other hand, foot, or eye (i.e. sitting with legs crossed, scratching the opposite elbow, successfully intersecting lines to draw a cross- without switching hands, reading left to right, etc

The child who avoids midline crossing can have difficulty coordinating both sides of the body and often times, has difficulty establishing hand dominance i.e. tends to alternate hand use when colouring, writing, eating, throwing.

ACTIVITIES

- Popping bubbles with both hands
- Connecting/ separating construction toys; magnetic blocks, Mega blocks, Lego, Mechano
- Balls - playing catch/ throw games to encourage coordinating both hands. Starting with large balls and reducing size as skills develop
- Playing musical instruments that involve both hands e.g. triangle, drumkit, tambourine, cymbals
- Finding hidden objects in Play-Doh
- Lacing activities
- Spreading butter on toast or buttercream on cakes etc
- Balls and balloons – encourage students to cross the midline when playing with balls and balloons or using hockey sticks
- Pick up something on the right side using left hand and the left side using the right hand
- Figures of eight – with physical prompting initially, draw a large sideways figure of eight in the air or with a paintbrush dipped in water on an outside wall etc
- Bowls - holding the bowl for mixing, great for cake making or use something like uncooked rice
- Clothes - fastening clothes, e.g. button, zip

- Container play - pouring from one container to another, try using pasta, rice, sand, water
- Lids - putting on and removing
- Cutting - use the weaker hand to stabilize the paper whilst cutting with scissors in the other hand
- Finger painting - with both hands at the same time
- Painting own hands for handprints
- Hands - washing hands and rubbing them together
- Magnets - use two magnets that have to be pulled apart
- Paper folding or origami
- Peg boards - pick up peg using one hand, place with the other
- Rolling pin - use both hands to roll out pastry, play dough
- Rope - pulling a rope hand over hand to bring it towards the body
- Rhymes – clapping, pat-a-cake or finger rhymes
- Sand - making circles, scribbles, swirls in a sand box
- Stationary items – ones such a hole punchers and staples that are easier to use with two hands
- Templates – drawing around different shapes
- Wheelbarrow - needs both hands to operate efficiently
- Wind-up toys - require two hands, one to hold, one to operate the winder - egg beater, jack-in-a-box, music box
- Rolling a ball of play dough into a long “snake” and then cutting it with a plastic knife
- Using two hands to roll a large gym ball

DISCRIMINATION OF LEFT AND RIGHT

Important because ...

It helps to integrate sensory and visual information, language function and memory

ACTIVITIES

- Massage each hand – Accompany it with the song “This is the way we massage the right/left hand” to the tune of “Here we go round the mulberry bush” or make up a story about Mr Right and Mrs Left and make each of the fingers a different child as you massage (eg “This is Mr Left, he is good at holding apples, this is Billy Left, he likes to play football, this is Charlotte Right, she likes to ride a bike” etc.
- Use puppets – Ask the right hand to choose a puppet and play with that on the right hand, then ask the left hand to choose a puppet and play with that. Encourage the students to interact with each other. You could finish by having both puppets – can the students say which one goes on which hand correctly?
- Shake hands – Use a red ribbon/ pen spot etc on right and a yellow for left – wrist or finger. Say “I want to shake your right hand” as you hold up a piece of

red ribbon. Can they extend the correct hand? Sing a song such as “If you're happy and you know it, shake your left hand”, while you shake it.

- Treasure Hunts – Use a tray, placed on either the left or the right of the student. Show them a raisin, Smartie etc and say “I want you to find this with your right hand” – touch that hand as a prompt as you say it. If they are happy to use a blindfold as a game, they can then feel around on the tray for the treat and pick it up.

HAND-EYE CO-ORDINATION

Important because...

It allows the eyes to track the movement of the hands naturally, which is critical for handwriting and reading alike. Hand-eye coordination also plays a role in good balance and directing hand-held objects with precision.

ACTIVITIES

- Target activities – Throw a range of equipment at targets such as balls in a bucket, beanbags in a hoop, quoits on a stick, balloons in a basketball hoop, bowling at skittles. Encourage the appropriated grasp/release of each object
- Magnetic fish- aiming for a specific fish
- Lacing and threading – Use different shape and sized beads, square, cylinder, oval, flat... set the activity in context preferably, eg. Making a necklace for themselves or someone else.
- Use lacing cards and encourage a left to right orientation as well as visual focus
- Try a simple sewing activity
- Throwing and catching
- Dribbling and shooting with a football

IN-HAND STRENGTH AND FINGER/IN-HAND MANIPULATIONS

Important because...

Hand and finger strength is important as it is required for many everyday activities such as doing up buttons and zips, cutting up food and increasing the endurance to complete activities such as writing.

Muscle strength of the hands and fingers increases as children participate in everyday activities.

Activities will help to develop and strengthen the muscles of the hands and fingers.

ACTIVITIES

- Water transfer – Challenge the students to transfer water from one receptacle to another using a sponge. Demonstrate how to soak up the water from the first receptacle and then squeeze it into the second receptacle. Can also wring out a cloth for cleaning tables or flannel for wiping face
- Playdough – (or clay, plasticine which is harder). Squeeze, squash, roll sausages and balls. Try making a plate of 'food' or a bird nest of eggs
- Banging – Wooden hammer to bang in pegs, beater to hit a drum.
Encourage accuracy
- Cutting – Cutting activities or 'free' cutting
- Tongs – Use tongs to pick up objects and move them from one container to another. Can make it into a race with another student or with an adult
- Whistling tubes – Spin it fast, holding tight. "Who can make loudest noise/longest sound?"
- Blow football – Use a cif bottle, washing up bottle, or alike to squeeze air out to blow a ping pong ball or grains of rice across a table
- Water pistols sprayed at a target
- Hole punch – could be on a piece of card to be used for threading
- Stapler
- Squeezing a ball – set a target and count repetitions and increase as strength increases
- Sharpen pencils
- Spray bottle to water plants or in art
- Peel and cut up fruit
- Make toast – spread own butter, open own jars of spread
- Tug of war (also good for proprioception)
- Digging
- Scrunching paper – crumple or screw up bits of paper using fingertips. Use a range of papers; tissue, crepe, foil, thin card. Make it a collage activity
- Finger rhymes – Such as "Twinkle Twinkle little Star" or scrunch up newspaper balls and then throw them at a target or into a bucket
- Deal out cards
- Colouring
- Undo/do up nuts and bolts
- Eye dropper with food colouring – watch the drops as they hit a bowl of water
- Opening the lid of a yoghurt container or a pop sided lunchbox
- Construction toys – Use a range that needs different manipulations, such as Duplo, stickle bricks, Lego etc. Combine with building a big tower, copying patterns or colours, using own imagination etc
- Opening things – Encourage students to open a range of packets, jars, bottles etc and to open own bags in the morning, do own buttons and zips, open own packets at lunchtime etc. Set challenges such as "Which lid goes with which container?"
- Potato head – ask students to make faces onto a potato (or something softer, if necessary, such as courgette or pear)
- Wind up toys – Different types. Also encourage using keys to open things

- Fastenings – all types, functional or practise
- Inset puzzles – with and without holding pegs
- Pegs – Such as a selection of multi-coloured pegs and sheets of cards in different colours. Ask students to peg the same colour peg with same colour card or hang up wet clothes to dry or paintings on a line

FINGER ISOLATION SKILLS

Important for...

Accuracy in skills such as doing up buttons, undoing zips, writing on a keyboard, controlling a pencil etc

ACTIVITIES

- Bubbles – Pop bubbles with fingers as they are blown in the air or adult catch them on the end of the wand and let child pop them
- Finger painting – focus on two fingers, one on each hand and assign each a different colour. Can the student put the right finger in the right colour?
- Piano/keyboard – Encourage free playing but also ask the student to use one finger to go up and down the keyboard
- Telephone – 'phoning' each other or a teacher using pushbutton numbers or set the walkie-talkies to a different number and talk to each other
- Writing on a computer keyboard

DIFFERENT GRASPS

SPHERICAL

- Tennis balls to pick up, hold and throw
- Version of "Pass the parcel" with a tennis ball. When the music stops, throw the ball into a basket in the middle

PINCER

- Popping bubble wrap
- Picking up small items
- Turning pages of a book
- Holding marbles or money
- Connect four, operation, buckaroo

THREE JAW CHUNK

- Holding blocks or cubes

CYLINDRICAL

- Holding beakers

- Lifting jugs of water to pour own drink
- Kaleidoscopes
- Rainmakers
- Cylindrical shakers

TRIPOD

- Encourage for writing

RELEASES

Important for ...

Dexterity, accuracy

ACTIVITIES

- Connect four – releasing counters into a frame. Can mark up counters with numbers or letters for lessons e.g. “Can you put the letter ‘m’/number 4 in the frame?” or with colours red/yellow or to make patterns (rather than playing four in a row)
- Lids – on bottles, pens etc
- Towers- making towers from bricks and releasing them properly
- Dominoes
- Marble run or kerplunk – releasing marbles