

- **HELPING TO DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS**

- These activities are some suggestions to help your child develop their hand skills and pre-writing skills. Try some of the following everyday if possible:
- Practice action songs and songs that name body parts ie head, shoulders, knees and toes
- Hit a balloon with hands or cardboard tube
- Catching bubbles by clapping hands then try popping with one finger
- Rolling a ball or passing a large car whilst sitting on the floor.
- Digging in sand pit or out in the garden with bucket and spade.
- Messy play – drawing in shaving foam on bathroom tiles while child is in bath.
- Painting pictures with brushes or sponges.
- Water play – washing dishes, pouring water from containers in the bath.
- Building towers with blocks, duplo models.
- Threading big beads
- Simple puzzles and inset boards
- Play dough – cutters, rollers.
- Drawing shapes – circles and wavy lines, scribbling with thick, chunky crayons or chalks.
- Scribble with thick chalks, crayons on corrugated cardboard – do hand over hand so your child can feel the movement.
- Baking activities – mixing ingredients for crispy cakes. Encourage your child to touch the mixture with his hands.
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- Start the activities initially to show your child what is expected and do activity for short time only. Best done little and often 😊

ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE USE OF BOTH HANDS

- These activities will encourage your child to use both hands to complete tasks.
- Various musical instruments can be useful for practicing alternating movements, such as drums
- Clapping activities and games.
- Wind up toys.
- Rip paper into strips to make a collage or mural.
- Jars and lids, twist apart toys
- Threading activities, start with straws, thick cord or a pipe cleaner and large beads or cotton reels.
- Scribbling or painting - make sure the free hand is stabilising the paper.
- Trace around or colour over plastic templates. This encourages stabilisation with the supporting hand
- Paint on a vertical surface so the paper has to be held in place with the non-dominant hand
- Cooking activities that require stirring, mixing and holding the bowl steady

• IDLINE CROSSING ACTIVITIES

- Pop bubbles with only one hand (they will have to reach across their body to pop the bubbles floating on the opposite side).
- Reach for bean bags, balls, stuffed animals, or other objects across midline (placed on opposite side), then throwing at a target.
- Let the child play with sand, scooping sand from one side of the body and putting it into a bucket on the opposite side of the body without switching hands

- Play flashlight tag. In a dimmed room, lie on your backs and have the child follow your flashlight beam projected on the wall with his own flashlight.
- Touch the opposite elbow and knee etc – could make into a game by applying and removing stickers or clothes pegs to opposite side of the body. Remember to change around so that both hands get a turn.

• ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE GRIP STRENGTH/GRASP AND DEXTERITY

- **Scrunching Paper** – Ask your child to scrunch up paper into small balls (using thumb, index and middle fingers) and throw them into a nearby bin. You can move the target further and further away to make it more difficult. Try and encourage them to scrunch it into as small a ball as possible using only one hand at a time. Paper thickness can be increased to make it more difficult.
- **Water & Sponge Race** – play a game whereby your child has to empty one container of water into another container by using a sponge. Encourage them to squeeze all of the water out of the sponge on each emptying (could get messy!, probably one for outside or in the bathroom!)
- **Cooking/Baking** - Involve your child in any cooking or baking activities, especially those which involve kneading and stirring etc.
- **Clothes Peg Race** – Have a race to see how many pegs they can peg onto their/your clothes, string etc in 20 seconds. Try using each hand and try to break your record!
- **Play Doh** – there are loads of activities you can do with play doh to increase hand strength, grasp and dexterity including:
 - Rolling play doh into sausages or snakes. See how skinny and long they can make them
 - Make a big ball by rolling the play doh on the table with the palm of hand (do both hands)
 - Make a pancake by flattening the ball of play doh with one or both hands. Try to make it as flat as possible.
 - Make a dinosaur from snake by using index finger and thumb to pinch spikes all the way down the snake
 - Pinch off small pieces using thumb, index and middle fingers and roll them into small balls
 - Hide items in the play doh (beads etc) try to find them by pulling the doh apart.

TOY IDEAS

- Lego, stickle bricks, blocks etc – the pulling apart and pushing together of pieces is good for working on strength
- Threading beads/buttons – this activity will help with fine manipulation of small items and improves accuracy of movement.
- Finger painting – Messy! But will encourage isolation of one finger at a time and therefore help give hands a good stretch. Try to use one finger at a time rather than using the whole hand
- Games which have small counters or pieces e.g. connect four, jigsaws etc this will help with fine-fingered manipulation of small items.
- Lots of pushing and pulling games – Tug of war etc
- Dot-to-dots
- Peg Boards
- Puzzles with Small knobs
- Feely Bags – Hide a number of everyday objects in a bag (comb, toy car, spoon etc – Anything really). Ask your child to place their hands inside the bag, feel each item and tell you what they think it is.
- These are just a few ideas, I'm sure you will come up with loads of other things to try