



Bilateral Activities

To improve hand skills

Non-dominant Hand Works as a Stabilizer

- Stirring in a bowl (cookie or pancake batter, for example)
- Spreading (Peanut Butter on bread)
- Coloring or writing (non-dominant hand holds paper down)
- Tearing Paper (Have student crumple up the pieces and throw baskets into a trash can as a game)
- Screw-on lids on various-sized jars
- Sorting Cards (non-dominant hand holds the stack)
- Putting together an interlocking puzzle
- Wind-up toys (I have found lots of them at the LoonaMagoo Toy store on Green Mount Road, have races across the kitchen table with your wind-ups)
- Punching Holes in paper with a hole punch
- Pegboards, Light Bright, Battleship
- Lacing cards

Hands Work Together

- Any interlocking building toys (legos, pop-beads, kinex, linking toys)
- Cutting paper
- Construction kits with nuts and bolts
- Buttoning, snapping, zipping
- Itsy-Bitsy spider finger game
- Putty, Clay, Play dough activities
- Cutting with cookie cutters
- Pulling the lids off markers and pens, and putting them back on
- Putting Easter egg halves together, and pulling them apart. Hide 3-4 treasures in a big basket of Easter eggs, have the child hunt through the eggs to find the treasures.
- Swinging a bat.
- Wringing out towels
- Folding paper, towels, etc.
- Unwrapping candy wrappers
- Stringing Beads

Alternating Arms/ Reciprocal Movement

- Climbing a ladder, or other gym/ playground equipment
- Crawling
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Swimming
- Climbing a Rope (The child doesn't necessarily have to climb up, they can "climb" placing one hand in front of the other to reach you; make this into a race or tag game with more than one child. This game is especially fun if your child is on a scooter.)

*There are a ton of activities that your child can do with you in the kitchen to develop hand skills. Tell your child that you are not strong enough, and you need their help to open and close things- Tupperware, Ziploc baggies, pens, etc.

*When you are doing activities with your child, try to adapt surfaces to their size; have them stand on a footstool, etc. Ideally, their elbows should line up with the countertop/table top surface. Also, position their bodies so that the materials they are working with are positioned at their midline (in line with their nose), or so that some of the materials are on their left side, and some are on their right side.

*Try to be aware of how much you are doing for your child. We all get in a rush sometimes, but giving them enough time to manipulate things on their own can make a world of difference when it comes to hand skill development.

*Many of these activities also help develop pinch strength and finger strength, which is essential for holding a pencil. Other pinch strengthening activities include:

- Opening and closing clothespins
- Pushing pushpins into corkboard
- Drawing with small crayons or small pieces of chalk (make them so small that they cannot be held with a fist grasp)
- Squirt guns, water droppers, squirt toys

*It is also good to do floor activities (such as coloring or puzzles) in a prone position (tummy on floor) while propping up on elbows and forearms. This helps develop strength in the proximal muscles at the chest, back, and shoulders. It will also challenge your child to shift their weight from arm to arm while reaching for toys.

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