




Hand Skills




Preparation




Before starting hand skills practice, make sure your child is sitting well. See Sitting Posture Advice Sheet.

- Chair press ups – sitting on your hands with palms facing down, rock from side to side and lift your bottom off the chair.
- Prayer position – push palms together with hands flat and elbows out, if saying a prayer. 
- Wall push ups – put hands flat against a wall at shoulder height. With feet firmly on the ground lean into the wall, bending elbows, and push your body back by straightening arms. It is important to look at the wall, and to bend only the arms, keeping your waist and back straight.

Activities



- Craft Activities – make collages (scrunching paper in the palm of one hand only), pipe cleaners, papier mache, potato printing, origami, cutting with scissors (clay, cotton, straws, cardboard), card making, paper weaving and paper chains (tear the paper using both hands), air dry clay, hama beads. Screwing up paper into a small ball, using one hand only. Begin with thin paper and gradually use thicker paper. This could be incorporated into an art/craft activity. 
- Art Activities – finger painting (in shaving foam, porridge, cornflour or wet sand), tracing, drawing, colouring in, using an easel/blackboard, chalk drawing.
- Construction games – matchstick and airfix models, Lego, K'nex, play dough (rolling, pinching, poking, flattening, squeezing), toy nuts and bolts sets, pick up sticks and jigsaws.

- 🕒 Cooking – Making bread / pastry crumbs or kneading dough. Pulling it apart and pinching it with thumb and index fingers together.
- 🕒 Lacing and sewing games. Threading pasta, beads, boards onto string, wooden dowels etc 
- 🕒 Jars, bottles and rubber toys – opening, closing and squeezing baster pipettes, goggle eye squeezey toys, washing up bottles or plant sprayers, popping bubble wrap.
- 🕒 Household tasks – hanging out washing with pegs (using 1 finger and thumb to pinch – keep changing which finger they use in opposition to the thumb), watering plants, folding laundry, wiping and scrubbing surfaces, digging and planting with a trowel. 
- 🕒 Picking up small items – using the pads of thumb and individual fingertips. Or picking up things with tongs, pegs or children’s toy tweezers. “Operation” board game. Peg board designs.
- 🕒 Music and imaginary play – “Incy Wincy Spider”, “Peter and Paul”, “Tommy Thumb”. Dialling a toy telephone, finger puppets, learning musical instruments, toy pianos. 
- 🕒 Flicking – marbles, table football, jumping frogs, tiddlywinks
- 🕒 Card/Dice games – shuffling, throwing multiple dice, sorting and holding cards in one hand, dominoes.

Adjustments



The following ideas could assist with developing your child’s hand skills however this list is not exhaustive.

- Start with bigger objects and work towards using smaller objects
- If the child is struggling to use both hands together, try holding or fixing an object on their behalf until they have mastered the technique.
- Choose objects with less resistance to start with and progress to tougher, stiffer items. E.g. in scissor work- cut short cuts into cardboard then cut across paper.
- Have the child complete activities in different positions. E.g. lying on tummy, sitting on floor or at table, side sitting.

