

## DEVELOPING A DOMINANT HAND

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### Why is this important?

We use both hands to do many daily activities. We often use one hand to do the skilled part of an activity while the other hand helps by holding something steady. The hand that is used for a skill is called the dominant hand.

You may notice that an infant uses one hand more than the other, but children are usually still working on developing a hand dominance until age 5 or 6.

We know that skills improve

- When kids are having fun
- With practice and opportunities to explore

When you are not sure which hand a child prefers to use as dominant, try to place objects in the middle and allow the child to decide which hand to use.

Children also need practice using their hands on the opposite sides of their body. This is called crossing midline.



### Things to try

#### Crossing midline

- Play tug of war with a skipping rope or a towel.
- Play with toy cars or trains on the floor.
- Draw on a big chalk board, white board or large piece of paper
- Play clapping games or action songs.
- Use a pail and shovel in sand, dirt or snow.
- Self Care: Getting dressed, drying off after a bath, combing hair, brushing teeth

## Working hand and helper hand

- Take a nature walk and collect objects in a basket or pail.
- Keep toys or craft materials in containers with zippers, twist-off or snap-on lids.
- Building toys: Blocks, Duplo, Lego, Magna Tiles, Marble Run, K'Nex.
- Beading and Lacing: Use big beads and stiff laces for beginners.
- Play card games.
- Play dough activities.
- Stand to draw or colour while holding the paper against the wall.
- Craft activities: Stickers, Gluing, Using a Ruler, Folding.
- Cut with scissors. (See *Using Scissors* Tip Sheet for more ideas)
- Dressing activities: Latching zippers, buttons, belt buckles, tying laces.
- Eating: Use a knife and fork. Hold a container of snack items.
- Cooking activities: Measuring, stirring, rolling or kneading dough.
- Movement games: Simon Says, Hokey Pokey, Twister.
- Playground activities: Swings, climbing.
- Musical instruments: Shakers, drums, guitar, piano.
- Sports: Baseball, Hockey, swimming, martial arts, bicycling, gymnastics.
- Gardening, cleaning, sewing and building for older children



**These are general suggestions that may or may not be appropriate for your child's age and stage.**

If you have questions and are waiting for Occupational Therapy service, consider booking a Consultation Clinic appointment.