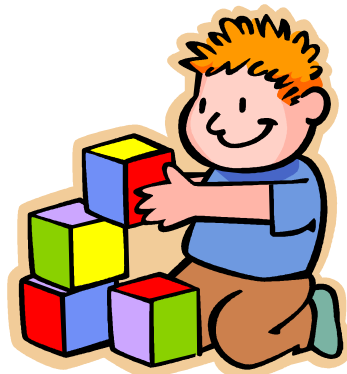
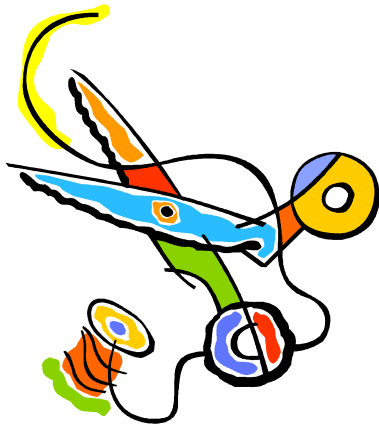


Doing Fine!

Practical Ideas to Support
Fine Motor Development



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With thanks to colleagues in the
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Why are fine motor skills so important?

Fine motor skills enable us to function in day to day situations.

Having well developed fine motor skills is the key to a huge range of essential attributes, including:

- **the ability to function independently**
- **A.D.L. (activities of daily living): eating, using cutlery, personal care, dressing, organisation)**
- **the development of social skills**
- **self esteem**
- **confidence**
- **being accepted as part of a group**
- **using equipment (including everyday classroom tools, e.g. rubber, pencil sharpener, ruler, scissors etc)**
- **pencil control, handwriting**
- **using a computer**
- **having an awareness of where the body is in space and what is going on around it**
- **motor planning**

Fine motor skills enable a child to function alongside his/her peers without being seen as different, being accepted as part of the group.

Key Vocabulary:

The terms below are commonly used by occupational therapists. They are very important factors in the development of fine motor skills. This pack aims to explain the meaning of these terms and offers lots of ideas and suggestions on how to develop fine motor skills within their context.

- **Proprioception**
- **Body image**
- **Motor planning**
- **Shoulder stability and arm strength**
- **Working positions**
- **Hand strengthening**
- **Manual (hand) dexterity**
- **Finger isolation/Pincer Grip**
- **In- hand manipulation**
- **Bi-manual/bi-lateral integration/Crossing the midline**
- **Hand dominance**
- **Perceptual development**
- **Activities for daily living (A.D.L.): Daily Living, Dressing, Eating/Drinking**
- **Sensory integration**
- **Tactile defensiveness**

Proprioception

Proprioception is having a sense of where the body is in space. Unless a child has a good body image and has an awareness of self and how it relates to where s/he is and what s/he is doing, movement and activity will be uncoordinated and disjointed.

Body Image (self awareness)

The development of body image is a continuous process through life, from birth to death. It is important for a child to have a stable reference point from which to organise himself and make judgements about his environment.

Self awareness allows children to know where they are and how to respond to the environment, and keeps them safe from harm. They learn to respond to touch, pressure, temperature (and pain). Only by developing all the senses including movement, can the body image be accurate and therefore meaningful.

Body image is the awareness of the body, including knowledge of body parts and their relationship to each other, and laterality, i.e. the internal awareness of the left and right sides. If body image is incomplete the child will not be able to move his body effectively through space and will receive poor sensory feedback to monitor his movements.

Try to reinforce body image by making reference to the position of a child's arms/legs/head. For example, ask a child whether his/her feet are on the floor, and if they can feel the back of the chair on their back, when they are sitting on a chair. When dressing after P.E. give a running commentary, e.g. 'one foot goes in the right shoe', 'push your arms up over your head', 'feel the jumper as it comes down over your tummy' etc.

Try some of these activities:

Name body parts: with eyes open/ with eyes closed

- Using only large body parts (e.g. leg, arm, head, foot) - you name a part, child touches the part and names it.
- Follow same procedure for small body parts (e.g. wrist, ankle, thumb, hip, knee)
- Demonstrate two body parts; child names them in order.
- Demonstrate three body parts; child copies sequence and then names them in order.
- Teach front and back of body parts.

Name body parts as above, correctly identifying left and right side:

- Child can touch body part on left or right as instructed, on self
- Child can copy a part as demonstrated by teacher, observing whether it is left or right.

Copy sequence of simple movements demonstrated by teacher:

- Use only legs - Use only arms - Use both together
- (Limbs may be placed forwards, backwards, sideways, behind, diagonally crossing the midline of the body)
- Child copies gesture with eyes open, then with eyes closed.
- Child copies position described verbally to him
- Child copies position he has already taken up.

Mirroring:

Ask the child to lie on the floor and close his/her eyes. Place an arm or a leg in a position (e.g. bend the child's left leg). Ask the child to make the other limb the same.

Simon Says Game

Copying actions: try this with and without verbal prompts

Following directions:

e.g. take two steps forward, three steps to the right, one step backwards

Magnets, fuzzy felts, plastic shapes:

Ask the child to arrange these to represent a person.

Drawing a person

Drawing round hands, feet, whole body – talk about where the pencil is touching as you draw.

Body Image (relationship with other objects)

Try some of these activities:

Child stands in middle of four objects:

- Child answers questions e.g: What is on your right, what is behind you?
- Child answers questions e.g: What is on your left, what is in front of you?

Child describes position to others/child follows instructions about where to stand.

Child works on similar activities using two small objects:

- Child follows instructions e.g: Put the red car behind the green car
- Child describes position of objects.

Child uses peg board to follow directional instructions.

Child moves from real objects to work on paper:

- Child follows instructions for drawings, e.g: draw a line across the top of the paper.
- Child uses squared paper for drawings, as above, e.g: draw a line three squares to the right, two squares down, one square left.

Motor Planning

Good organisation of movements is needed in order to be able to plan an activity, repeat and practice skills, select, order and adjust movements as necessary.

Motor planning is about how to 'think, plan and do' a new task. Good motor planning needs good sensory feedback.

The child will develop motor planning skills through exploration and adaptation, using all their senses. If one part of the sensory system is faulty, it can have a significant effect. For example, a child may be unable to copy actions of others or pick up visual clues. They may be unable to follow verbal instructions. They may not be able to work out how to start or finish the task, and cannot work in a logical sequence.

It is helpful to routinely break things down into a simple sequence: first (beginning), next (middle), last (end).

Obstacle courses can be great fun and are an excellent way of developing motor planning skills. Work on tasks which will develop the following:

- Body awareness with/without eyes covered
- Spatial awareness
- Tracking an object away from and moving towards the body/at varying levels
- Crossing midline of body
- Reactions
- Ability to concentrate/watch/listen

Shoulder stability and arm strength

Some children have generally low muscle tone and low muscle strength. This can affect posture, and the ease with which a child performs tasks. Weakness in the shoulder girdle will mean that a child has less control over his/her hands, affecting hand function and writing skills.

Good hand function requires a good sitting position and a stable upper body (arms, elbows, shoulders). If the shoulders are weak, the hands will not function well. Every day tasks such as carrying, pushing and pulling are great for building up strength.

Try some of these activities:

Allocate classroom jobs:

Carrying the drinks tray, fetching (and carrying) the bags of fruit, stacking chairs, giving out books all require two hands.

Large scale writing patterns

Practise pre-writing patterns on a large scale. These can be made larger, by working on paper pinned to the wall, working at an easel (or using a black or white board) at shoulder height. This encourages the development of fluent movements at the shoulders and elbows.

Writing on pavement

Try writing on the paving stones or playground surface outside, making large patterns using pavement chalk.

Cleaning up!

Now ask the children to clean away the chalk using scrubbing brushes and soapy water.

Painting with water

Try using a roller or a wallpaper brush to paint the walls with water- remember to stretch up high to reach the top!

Cleaning the board/wiping tables

Sweeping/mopping floors-use big arm movements

Working Positions

Good postural control is very important. A stable shoulder girdle and a stable pelvic girdle (hips) are necessary in order to be able to isolate arm, leg and head movements. A good working position is essential in order for the body to work at its best. Children need to be comfortable in order to concentrate and focus on the task. (A sitting checklist is enclosed at the back of this pack.)

Try working in a range of positions to develop good postural control.

- High kneeling helps to develop upper body strength and hip stability. Have a kneeling table in your classroom where there are no chairs and everyone kneels to do an activity.
- Give children the opportunity to work in a position where it is necessary to work across the body to practise crossing their midline.
- Lying prone (on the tummy) legs straight, supported on the forearms to look at a book, do a floor activity etc. helps to develop shoulder and upper body strength.
- Standing to work at eye level or above helps to develop upper body strength and hip stability.
- Encourage symmetry when sitting at the table, and always remind the child to keep both feet flat on the floor, with the chair pulled well in, bottom back on the seat. This will support good bimanual integration (two handed activity).
- Always check that the furniture is the right height to allow good sitting at a table. Feet should be supported at all times.

Manual (Hand) Dexterity

Well-developed fine motor skills including in-hand manipulation, finger isolation, pincer grip, good manipulative control, and well developed reach and grasp techniques are all needed in order to carry out many A.D.L. (activities of daily living).

It is essential to have good dexterity in order to control a pen or pencil with the fingers. Some children hold their pencil with static fingers and make movements from their wrist, elbow or even their shoulders. This makes their movements less accurate and increases the amount of effort required to produce a piece of work.

Many of the activities below will help to develop movement in the fingers and hands, so that fine motor (hand) activities are easier and require less effort.

Try some of these activities:

- ***Finger Loops***

(also helps bimanual/bilateral integration, sequencing)

Practise each hand separately at first. Ask the child to touch the thumb to the tip of the index finger, then the third, fourth and little finger in turn, then the fourth, third and index again. It may help to count out loud (1,2,3,4,1,2,3). Try the other hand. Make sure that the thumb touches the very tip of the finger, and try to make the movements smooth.

When this action is easy, practise both hands at the same time, and repeat three times. Next, try one hand with the eyes closed. Then try the other hand with closed eyes, and finally try both hands together with eyes closed.

Closing the eyes means that the child has to “feel” where his/her hands and fingers are, rather than relying on looking. This will reinforce hand awareness (proprioception).

(Important note: Don't keep doing this forever- It can get very boring! But it can be a good warm-up activity.)

- ***Drumming Fingers***

(also helps hand strength, motor planning)

With forearms resting on the table, ask the child to “drum” their fingers. Different table surfaces will make different sounds.

Manual (Hand) Dexterity continued

- **Spinning Tops**

(also helps pincer grip, finger isolation, hand-eye coordination)

There are many small spinning tops available in the shops, or even given away in Christmas crackers. (Some spinning tops have a small felt tip pen in their tip, so that spiral patterns can be made on the paper when the top is successfully spun.)

- **Tied-Up Fingers**

(also helps hand strength, finger isolation)

Wind an elastic band around the four fingers on each hand.

Without using the other hand, ask the child to try and “wriggle” the fingers free. Practise each hand separately, and then both at the same time.

- **Elastic Band Stretches**

(also helps hand strength, hand-eye coordination, finger isolation)

Stretch an elastic band between the thumb and index finger, and place it over nails in a board, or use a commercial pin board.

- **Bandage Scrunching**

(also helps hand strength, finger isolation)

Place a one metre piece of crepe bandage onto a table, and ask the child to rest his/her wrist on one end of the bandage. Using all of the fingers, “scrunch” the bandage up into the hand. This game can be made more exciting if a picture or small object is attached to the end of the bandage for the child to “catch”.

- **Money Boxes**

(also helps pincer grip, hand-eye coordination)

Place a variety of coins or counters on the table, and ask the child to pick them up with either hand to post them into a money box. The money box should be supported with the “non-active” hand.

- **Sorting Games**

(also helps sequencing, hand strength)

Place a variety of objects onto a small plate, and ask the child to sort them out into “types”. Vary the objects according to the child’s manipulative ability. Examples: macaroni, lentils, rice, dried peas, coins, buttons. Try sorting single handed, putting one hand behind the back, in the lap or on the head. Then try it with the other hand.

Manual (Hand) Dexterity continued

- **Playing Cards**

(also helps bilateral integration, hand strength)

These can be quite difficult to pick up from the table, hold in the hands and deal out, so they make very good dexterity activities. Many card games are available from toy shops.

- **Pots and Jars**

(also helps hand strength, bimanual integration, hand-eye coordination)

Many household products come in containers with screw-type lids of varying sizes. Children enjoy taking the lids on and off, and taking out small objects. The jars need to be supported with one hand, while the other manipulates the lid. Some commercial size sorting toys also require this twisting action.

- **Drawing Pins**

Use thumb to press drawing pins into board (vary texture and hardness)

Finger Isolation/Pincer Grip

The ability to isolate (or point) the index finger is an essential basic skill. Without this skill it would be difficult to achieve a pincer grip, and activities such as holding a pencil and managing buttons are affected.

Some children have low muscle tone and this can affect the strength of the index fingers, which in turn affects the “pressing” power and effectiveness of the pincer grasp.

The activities below will help a child to develop good strong index isolation skills in each hand. These activities can also be used to develop finger isolation skills and strength in the other fingers, and therefore improve hand awareness (proprioception).

Try some of these activities:

- **Play Dough**
(also helps hand strengthening)

It is possible to use a variety of types of play dough to help increase finger strength. Soft play dough requires less pressure to squash, whilst harder plasticene requires greater finger strength. Therapy putty is available from most catalogues.

Roll a long sausage of play dough and place it horizontally on the table in front of the child. Ask the child to rest their finger tips on the sausage, and press with each finger in turn. Include the thumb also. You can practise each hand individually, or both at the same time.

- **Squashing Peas**
(also helps hand strengthening)

Roll out some small play dough “peas”, and place these on the table in front of the child. Ask the child to squash each pea in turn, using a specified finger or thumb. This also helps to improve eye/ hand co-ordination.

- **Pop-Up and Press Toys**
(also helps hand strengthening)

Many commercially available toys can be used to encourage finger isolation skills. These include activity centres with buttons to press (for example, pop up animal toys), and other “cause and effect” games. Other useful toys include cash registers, calculators and toy telephones.

Finger Isolation/Pincer Grip continued

- **Sand Drawing**

(also helps hand strengthening)

Fill a small baking tray with sand, and ask the child to “draw” patterns or pictures in the sand using their index fingers as a “pencil”. The sand can be made wet, or the amount of sand in the tray increased, to vary the effort needed to move the finger. Other materials can be used to fill the tray, for example fish tank gravel, potting compost, cornflour mixed with water.

- **Finger Lifts**

(also helps hand strengthening)

Ask the child to place both hands palm down on a table. Touch each finger in turn and ask the child to lift it off the table, keeping the other fingers and wrist still. Start with the index finger and thumb, then progress to the third finger, fifth, and finally to the fourth (ring) finger. Next, try pointing to the finger to be lifted, rather than touching it.

- **Using a water pistol**

Squeezing the trigger of a water pistol is a good finger isolation activity (if a little wet!)

- **Wind up toys**

Learning to wind things up (e.g. a clock, musical box etc) is a pre-requisite for being able to turn a key- a vital life skill.

Hand strengthening exercises

Some children have low muscle tone, which affects the quality of body movements and reduces stamina.

Weakness in the hands means that children will find that fine motor tasks, including writing, require great concentration and effort. These children will work more slowly than their peers, and will tire more quickly.

The activities below should help to improve hand and finger strength and will also promote the child's awareness of his/her hands' position in space (proprioception).

Try some of these activities:

- **Play Dough**

(also helps finger isolation, hand-eye coordination)

This can be used in a number of different ways to help improve hand strength. The play dough should be soft initially, moving on to harder dough or plasticene as strength improves.

- Squeeze lumps of play dough between two hands
- Roll a thick sausage, and pull pieces off with one hand, and then the other
- Knead play dough or pastry
- Press cutters into increasingly thick play dough pancakes

- **Clothes Pegs and Bulldog Clips**

(also helps pincer grip, motor planning)

These household objects are often readily available, and children enjoy playing with them. Children can help to peg out washing, or can simply place the pegs onto the edge of an old shoe box.

- **Pop and Lock Toys**

(also helps bilateral coordination)

There are many types of "pop and lock" or "link up" toys available. These include coloured beads, stars and animals. Other games, such as Lego, Stickle Bricks, and magnetic blocks also require some effort to pull apart, and will help to improve hand strength.

- **Paper Games**

(also helps spatial awareness, hand eye coordination)

Paper folding and tearing requires good hand strength to be accurate. Children can tear paper against a ruler edge (which requires strength to keep it still) to make lines straight. Origami may be enjoyed by older children.

Hand strengthening exercises continued

- ***Tug of War***

(also helps bilateral integration)

Children will have to hold on to the rope quite tightly when pulling against another team or opponent.

- **Finger Pushes**

Ask the child to sit with the palms of his/her hands together. Keeping the hands together, push the elbows up and the hands down. Repeat this several times.

- **Using a hole punch or stapler**

Ask the child to make a pattern all round a piece of card. This is a great pre-requisite for using scissors. The child should use both hands- one to squeeze/press the stapler and one to hold and manoeuvre the card.

In- Hand Manipulation

In-hand manipulation is the ability to use and manipulate objects, using all parts of the hands (including the palms). It affects the way we carry out many every day activities, e.g. using a key in a lock, handling coins, holding playing cards, using cutlery, holding a pencil, using the mouse on a computer.

Try some of these activities with one hand behind your back, or one hand on your head. Just use one hand.

Use each of your finger tips and your thumb to pick up small things like beads and Lego bricks.

Use your thumb and forefinger to pick up flat things like coins and playing cards.

Use one hand to pick up small objects and hold them in the palm of your hand- see how many you can hold.

Can you unwrap elastic bands or sellotape from your finger tips? Try each finger and then the thumb.

Can you unwrap a sweet in the same way?

Can you push the lids off pens and felt tips?

Can you roll a marble up and down a wall without dropping it?

Can you put rings on and take them off your fingers?

Bi-manual Integration/ Crossing the Midline

The ability to co-ordinate both sides of the body and to cross the midline of the body is a basic skill, essential for the development of many fine and gross motor skills.

Some children find co-ordinating their body sides very difficult, and either avoid crossing their midline, swap hands during a task or have difficulty supporting an activity with one hand whilst using the other.

Often we need to use both hands at the same time, but need to make different movements with each. If this is difficult for a child then they may have trouble with many tasks (such as using a knife and fork, managing buttons and using scissors).

Practising some of the activities below will make a child more confident and more accurate at integrating both hands successfully. At all times the child should be encouraged to support an activity with one hand whilst using the other: for example, to steady the paper when writing; to hold the cereal bowl with one hand and the spoon with the other.

Encourage reaching across the midline for manipulative activities by placing equipment to one side of the child. Remember to repeat the activity for both sides.

Try some of these activities:

- **Potato or sponge printing:**

Use a large piece of paper and ask the child to fill the page from one side to the other with prints. Ask the child to remain seated and only to use the dominant hand.

- **Writing patterns**

Practise pre-writing patterns, making sure that the forearm is supported on the table. Try to keep going all the way across the page without taking the pencil off the paper, in one fluent movement. Plastic 'write on/wipe off' (Clearview) surfaces and felt tip pens encourage a smooth hand movement.

Bi-manual Integration/ Crossing the Midline continued

- **Threading**

(also helps sequencing)

A large number of threading activities are available commercially. However, many objects found around the house can also be used to thread; for example, cotton reels, old necklace beads, and macaroni pasta. The child may find it easier to thread initially onto a static pole or post, making sure that the non-dominant/ passive hand is supporting the activity and not hanging off the table.

Next use a thread that has a wooden or metal “needle” on one end, as this is easier to manipulate. If this is not available, stiffen the end of the lace by wrapping it with Sellotape.

Finally progress to a simple lace and small beads.

- **Lacing**

(also helps hand strength, sequencing)

Lacing boards are readily available. Encourage the child to hold the board with one hand and lace with the other.

- **Cutting**

Always encourage the child to cut away from their body, and to use the table for support at first. Use the ‘thumbs up’ method, i.e. keep both thumbs visible (on top of the paper and on top of the scissors when cutting).

- **Using a hole punch/stapler**

Ask the child to make a pattern all round a piece of card. This is a great pre-requisite for using scissors. The child should use both hands- one to squeeze/press the stapler and one to hold and manoeuvre the card.

- **Link-Up Toys**

(also helps bilateral, hand strength)

These include Lego, Stickle Bricks, “pop-and-lock animals/ beads, magnetic blocks and Mobilo. The child will need to support the activity with one hand, while pushing/ pulling with the other.

- **Nuts and Bolts**

(also helps bilateral, hand strength)

This activity should be supported with one hand and manipulated with the other.

Bi-manual Integration/ Crossing the Midline continued

- **Posting Boxes**

(also helps finger strength, bilateral)

Children will often use both hands to manipulate the shapes into the holes, and if the posting “box” is the “all around” variety then this can be turned with one hand while the other manipulates the shape.

- **Play Dough**

(also helps to develop ALL areas of fine motor development)

This is a fantastic material that can be used in a variety of ways to develop bimanual integration. Try the following:

Squeeze large lumps of play dough between two hands.

Use a rolling pin with both hands. (Make sure that the rest of the child’s body stays still, i.e. they don’t rock their trunk backwards and forwards.)

Roll “peas” of dough between two hands

- **Pouring games**

Practise pouring from a container held in one hand to another container held in the other, and back again.

- **Stirring games**

Practise stirring, using a spoon in one hand and steadying the bowl with the other hand. Vary the task by using a whisk or a hand mixer.

- **Using spoons and ladles**

Use a spoon, ladle, fish slice etc. to transfer items from one bowl to another

- **Clapping Games**

(also helps bilateral integration, sequencing, motor planning)

Simple clapping games encourage the child to use both hands in the same way at the same time. These include clapping to music, and trying to clap soap bubbles in the air.

Try asking the child to practise clapping a partner’s hands.

Try clapping hands together, then both of the partner’s hands at the same time. The next stage is to clap opposite hands (your left to the child’s right), and finally to clap the child’s hands, crossing the centre of the body (left to left etc.). Each sequence should be steady and maintained for a good length of time, e.g. ten sets. There are many clapping songs to accompany these games.

Bi-manual Integration/ Crossing the Midline continued

- **Hand Exercises**

(also helps hand strength, sequencing, crossing midline)

Ask the child to hold their hands up in front of their body, with their palms facing you. Ask the child to open and close their hands, making sure the fingers are fully extended, and that the movements are rhythmical and steady. Next practise this exercise with eyes closed. Try to keep going for ten seconds.

When these movements are smooth and confident, ask the child to open one hand, and close the other. Swap over i.e. close the open hand and open the closed hand. Repeat this for ten seconds, and then practice with eyes closed.

N.B. Make sure that the child keeps his/ her head in the middle, and doesn't make extra body movements while completing this exercise.

Establishing Hand Dominance

Parents and teachers can be anxious if a child does not appear to have settled on a dominant hand when he/she is practising early pencil skills. Try not to be too concerned.

Intervention should only be considered if dominance still isn't fully established by around the age of 6.

Before clear dominance is established, encourage lots of activities that involve symmetrical or alternating use of both hands, alternating the use of one hand as the dominant hand, such as clapping games, ripping paper (to make papier mache, threading and construction).

To help establish dominance, encourage activities that require the continued use of one hand, without directing which hand to use.

Try some of these activities:

- Large-scale scribbling on chalkboard or large pieces of paper
- Flattening a ball of playdough or putty
- One handed throwing and aiming

When consistent use of one hand begins, use dominant/assist activities e.g. writing, drawing, cutting, construction toys.

If the child has not yet clearly established dominance, carry out two-handed activities at mid-line, or using one hand at a time, with the hands alternating.

Do not try to influence a child to use a particular hand until it is clear that dominance still has not been fully established, and when it is having a direct effect upon learning skills (e.g. handwriting).

Laterality Questions

Try some of these activities to see which hand is preferred:

- Fold your arms in front of you. Which arm is on top?
- Fully interlock the fingers of both hands. Which thumb is on the top?
- Imagine an itch in the middle of your back. Which arm is scratching it?
- To which ear do you hold the telephone?
- Imagine you are using a telescope. Which eye would you use to look through it?
- Imagine you are spreading toast. Which hand is your knife in?
- Wink at a friend. Which eye is winking?
- Clap your hands together, one on top of the other. Which hand is on the top?
- Take a step forward. Which foot goes first?
- Balance on each leg in turn. Which is easiest?
- Kick a ball. Which leg do you use?
- Open a screwtop jar. Which hand unscrews the lid?
- Deal a pack of cards. Which hand deals the cards?
- Thread a needle. Which hand holds the thread?

A.D.L: Self help Skills

Well developed fine motor skills are essential for many every day tasks. The activities below all require specific skills and present huge challenges, but the list is endless! Working in partnership with parents is essential. Try to provide lots of opportunities to practise in school, in a real life situation and use A.D.L. as I.E.P. targets if appropriate.

using cutlery brushing hair stirring/mixing/grating
turning a key in a lock carrying a tray
using switches/turning dials accurately using a towel
pouring washing using a keypad
handling money shoe laces threading/lacing
playing cards winding up a clock opening/ closing a lunchbox
buttons/ zips/ fastenings/ buckles opening door handles
pulling on socks flushing the toilet opening an envelope
using a tissue/ pushing tissues up the sleeve using scissors
opening packets turning/regulating taps
removing lids from jars/bottles pulling out/ putting in the plug
sorting/ tidying fastening seat belt tearing paper
folding (paper, material etc) packing a bag/pencil case
putting books on a shelf using a toothbrush
stacking plates/dishes etc squeezing (e.g. toothpaste, washing
up liquid bottle)
stacking chairs spreading
climbing a stile climbing ladders (up the slide)
opening rucksack fasteners playing a recorder
using a ruler/rubber/pencil sharpener/paint brush/classroom tools

A.D.L: Dressing Skills

Working in partnership with parents is essential. Try some of the following ideas to support children in developing their independence Always reinforce a good body image by making reference to the position of a child's arms/legs/head etc when dressing/undressing. Give a running commentary (and encourage them to join in) e.g. 'one foot goes in the right shoe', 'push your arms up over your head', 'feel the jumper as it comes down over your tummy' etc.

Try some of these suggestions:

- When changing for P.E., ensure the child has plenty of space around him/her (preferably not at a table with several other children, so his/clothes don't get muddled). He/she should be sitting down, either on the floor or on a chair.
- It can be helpful to sit by a wall, to lean against it for extra stability, or to push against it when pulling clothing on (e.g. trousers, shoes etc).
- Make sure parents know exactly on which days their child has P.E. and goes swimming, and encourage them to provide appropriate clothing, to make the dressing process as simple as possible.
- Clothing should be loose fitting, avoiding tricky fastenings when possible, i.e. velcro fastenings on shoes, jogging bottoms with elasticated waists, polo shirts, avoiding buttons, slip on pumps, not lace-ups.
- Fix a large tab on end of zips to make them easier to grasp.
- Label all clothing clearly with a coloured tag at the back, so the child can orientate the item easily.
- Mark left and right clearly on shoes and pumps. (One school routinely marks black pumps using a silver pen on the toes or heels. Some commercial shoe manufacturers now make the left and right shoe soles in different colours.)
- Label shoes inside with arrows that point to each other
- Use a model (e.g. a doll, drawing or a jigsaw) for the child to copy when getting dressed.

A.D.L: Eating and Drinking

Try some of the following ideas to support children in developing their independence. Working in partnership with parents is essential.

Remember that eating is a fine motor activity and therefore a good sitting position is essential, preferably with feet well supported, either on the floor or by using a foot rest.

Encourage the child to use a mirror when eating, to develop body awareness.

Experiment with a range of cups and beakers to find the most suitable one (i.e. with and without handles, with and without straws, with and without lids)

A range of specialist cutlery and dishes is available from Nottingham Rehab Catalogue. The 'Caring Cutlery' range is particularly recommended by Occupational therapists.

Look in the paediatric section on the Nottingham Rehab catalogue::
<http://www.nrs-uk.co.uk>

Sensory integration

When a child has a sensory integration disorder, information from the environment and one's own senses is not organised well in the brain. This can result in problems with processing information and behaving appropriately for the task in hand.

Specialist occupational therapy can be very effective but it is not widely available.

Some children need 'movement breaks' in order to stay focussed. Try to allow frequent opportunities for movement between and during activities.

Tactile defensiveness

The tactile system (sense of touch) gives us vital information about the world around us. It alerts us to danger and pain. Some children have over-sensitive tactile systems or they are not working properly.

Some children are oversensitive to very light touch.

As a result these children can often display behaviour which may seem extreme or even naughty. They often appear distractible and/or hyperactive.

They may dislike being physically close to people. They may find certain situations very difficult, for example:

lining up, moving from one place to another in a crowded situation, playtimes, getting ready for home time.

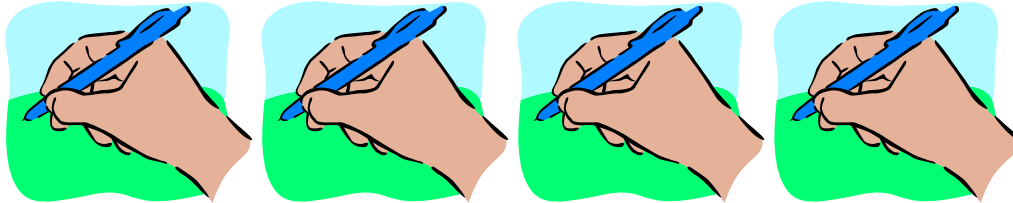
They may have an aversion to being hugged, or touched in any way. They may occasionally use overly-firm touch as a response to others, which can often be misinterpreted as pushing and shoving.

Always approach the child from the front and let him/her see you are coming.

Place the child at the back of the line to avoid too much unnecessary contact.

If you touch the child, use firm pressure e.g. place both hands on both shoulders and grip firmly rather than a light stroke.

Am I ready to write?



My feet are flat
 My bottom is back
 My head is in the middle
 I sit tall

Am I sitting properly?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is my table the right height?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have I got the best pencil or pen?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have I got the right paper for the job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can I see what I'm doing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is my table top clear of clutter?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm right handed- is my paper on my right?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm left handed- is my paper on my left?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have I slanted my paper the correct way?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I write, can I see what I've written?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If I've got any 😞 what am I going to do about it?</i>		