

These activities are designed to encourage the use of both hands together. Eventually the child will be able to perform the fine manipulations with one hand while the other hand assists or supports the activity.

Symmetrical use of both hands:

- Banging a drum with both hands together.
- Shaking maracas or sleigh bells with two hands.
- 'Pop and lock' toys such as large beads, teddy links, Popoids, Duplo, magnetic blocks.
- Hand clapping games and rhymes where both hands are clapped together and knees are tapped.
- Playdough: Rolling a fat sausage with two hands, pulling chunks of Playdough from a large sausage, using a rolling pin with two hands.

Alternating hand movements:

- Banging a drum or other percussion instrument with alternating hands.
- Finger painting: Drawing a line with the finger of one hand, and then the other.
- Sand tray/shaving foam on a tray etc: ask the child to draw a pattern with the one hand and the rub it out with the other hand, following the same pattern.

Different movements with each hand:

- **Opening jars and bottles:** put children's toys/crayons/raising etc. into jars that are easy to open.
- **Play barrels** and other 'twisting' toys.
- **Russian dolls** or other stack-together toys that are pushed together and pulled apart.
- **Wind-up toys** need to be stabilised while the key is turned.
- **Drawing** round templates or stencils.
- **Rubbings:** by placing objects underneath paper for children to run over with crayons. The child will need to stabilise the paper with one hand.
- **Threading** large beads onto a wooden lace.
- **Tearing** paper to make paper mache or for collages.

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- **water play** toys are excellent for two-handed play. One jug is held while water is poured from another. Water pumps need to be help with one hand while the other presses or pumps.
- **Bottle top sorting:** Gather together a range of plastic bottles and their screw tops for the child to sort and place/remove.
- **Newspaper stuffing:** Tear newspaper into strips, crumple the pieces and stuff them into, for example a sock to make a soft ball or puppet head.
- **Stretch scrunchies:** Gather a collection of hair scrunchies for the child to stretch over cardboard tubes or (empty!) crisp tubes.
- **Flour/bean sifter:** Mix together some flour and dried beans. Give the child a sieve and two bowls. Ask the child to hold and shake the sieve with two hands, and tip the beans into the empty bowl.
- **Sorting with tweezers:** Give the child a plate of objects to hold in the non-dominant hand. Using tweezers held in the dominant hand the child picks up an object and sorts it into piles or pots of similar objects. Objects can include Lego pieces, buttons, seeds etc.
- **Hand Stars:** Sit the child with his/her elbows bent, and palms facing away from their body. Ask the child to close both hands at the same time, making sure that only the hands move (not the head, elbows, trunk etc). Ask the child to open and close their hands ten times, keeping the rhythm regular and making sure that all the fingers are stretched out when they open. When this pattern is fluent and reasonably quick, ask the child to practise the same exercise with eyes closed.

The next stage is for the child to start with one hand fisted, and the other with fingers extended. Close the open hand, and open the fisted hand simultaneously, making sure that only the hands move. Repeat this pattern twenty times. When the child is confident, try with eyes closed.

Classroom activities:

- Keep items (such as snacks and pencils) in twist-top jars or draw-string bags.
- Keep reward stars/stickers in small containers, like those that are often used to hold cosmetic creams when travelling.