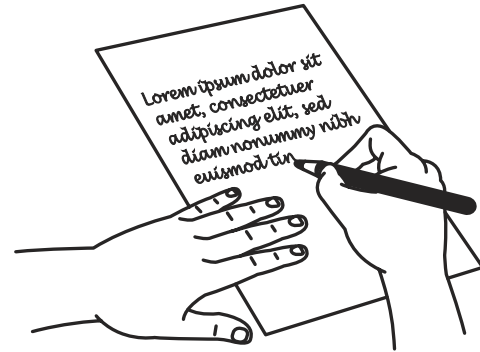


School aged children develop their hand skills by playing and using their hands to do everyday activities such as writing or drawing when doing their schoolwork. Medical conditions can affect how your child uses his hands.

How do school aged children typically use their hands?

School aged children generally use their hands in a skillful and coordinated way. They tend to show a clear hand preference which means they use one hand for the skilled part of an activity and the other hand as the assisting hand. For example, when writing the preferred hand holds and uses the pencil whilst the other hand supports the paper. At this age children are developing their independence and skills in drawing, writing, using scissors and cutlery, getting dressed and sporting activities.



Helpful strategies

- ▶ Have fun playing with your child and encourage him to use both arms and hands. Through play activities your child will develop and practice his hand skills. If your child tends to use only one hand, try activities that require two hands such as riding a bike or playing card games.
- ▶ Help your child to use his hands by showing him how and if necessary guide him. For example, demonstrate how to shuffle cards, then help him to hold the cards in one hand and shuffle the cards with his preferred hand.
- ▶ Encourage your child to use both hands at every opportunity.
- ▶ Reward your child whenever he tries to use both hands. Tell him what a good job he is doing; clap and cheer his efforts; or give him a treat.



Please contact your occupational therapist if you have any queries about the above information.

Indoor activities

Encourage your child to do these activities with her preferred hand and use her other hand to hold and position the toy, object or paper.

- ▶ Building with Lego, Magnetix or other constructional toys.
- ▶ Art and craft activities such as making birthday cards, a book, or paper planes. Use stickers, scissors, a ruler, a hole punch, a stapler, sticky tape or a glue stick, textas, paper and cardboard.
- ▶ Make things using old boxes, egg cartons, lids, wrapping paper, pipe cleaners, wool and masking or sticky tape.
- ▶ Creative activities such as knitting, making friendship bands, clay modeling or paper mache.
- ▶ Drawing, writing, colouring or using stencils.
- ▶ Sharpen pencils.
- ▶ Use a ruler.
- ▶ Shuffle and deal cards when playing card games such as Uno, Fish and Solitaire.
- ▶ Take lids on and off jars that are filled with fun objects such as stickers, lollies, hair elastics and clips, or balloons.
- ▶ Cooking activities – mixing, measuring, sifting, kneading, rolling or using cookie cutters.
- ▶ Musical instruments such as a recorder, xylophone, shakers, drums, mouth organ, guitar, keyboard or piano.
- ▶ Wrap or unwrap a present.

Please contact your occupational therapist if you have any queries about the above information.



Outdoor activities

Encourage your child to do these activities using both hands.

Some of these activities will require supervision.

- ▶ Ride a bike or scooter.
- ▶ Woodwork activities – hammering, sawing or sanding.
- ▶ Unwind and wind up the string when flying a kite.
- ▶ Playground equipment – swings, seesaws, climbing frames and ladders.
- ▶ Skip using a skipping rope.
- ▶ Bat and ball games, such as cricket, golf and tennis.
- ▶ Swimming.
- ▶ Sand play – dig, pour, mix, build castles or drive cars.
- ▶ Water play – fill up a shallow container with water. Pour water into cups, add toy animals, ice-blocks or a few drops of food colouring. Alternatively, use a sponge to wash a doll or clean a bike.
- ▶ Basketball/football activities – bouncing, dribbling, throwing, catching, marking, hand balling, shooting for goals.
- ▶ Help in the garden – water with a hose, sweep pathways or rake up leaves.
- ▶ Water plants with a spray bottle.
- ▶ Skittles – roll the ball with both hands.
- ▶ Hit a suspended ball or balloon with a rolling pin or bat that is held with both hands.

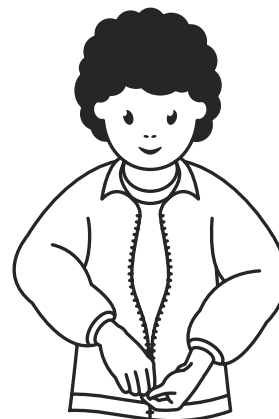
Please contact your occupational therapist if you have any queries about the above information.



Everyday activities

Encourage your child to do these activities using both her hands.

- ▶ Do up buttons and zips on clothing.
- ▶ Do up belts.
- ▶ Tie shoelaces.
- ▶ Turn taps on and off.
- ▶ Put toothpaste onto the toothbrush.
- ▶ Use a nail brush to clean finger nails.
- ▶ Do up zips on school bags and pencil cases.
- ▶ Pack and unpack your school bag.
- ▶ Remove money from a purse or wallet while holding it.
- ▶ Remove lids from a yoghurt container, Vegemite or jam jar or drink bottle.
- ▶ Hold a yoghurt container and eat with a spoon.
- ▶ Make toast or a sandwich – open jars of peanut butter or honey and use a knife to spread and cut.
- ▶ Use a knife and fork at mealtimes.
- ▶ Peel a banana, orange or mandarin.
- ▶ Open up pop-top drink bottles and lunch boxes.
- ▶ Open packets of lollies or chips.
- ▶ Help in the kitchen – set the table, dry the dishes or unpack the dishwasher.
- ▶ Get a drink of water from a tap while holding the glass.
- ▶ Sweep the floor, verandah or outside pathways.



Please contact your occupational therapist if you have any queries about the above information.