

Helping my child to use their hands

Children with disability often need extra encouragement and help to use their hands and to become independent in doing things.

THE PROBLEMS CAN BE THAT BABIES AND CHILDREN WITH BRAIN DAMAGE:

- May not know their hands are there.
- May not easily be able to move their fingers, hands and arms.
- May not be able to hold an object/then may not be able to let it go!
- Cannot easily see what they are going with their hands (hand-eye co-ordination)
- May not be strong enough with their head and back to lift and reach.

SO HELP THE CHILD BY:

- Positioning them so they can see, reach and hold.
- Often gently massaging the hands/lift and rotate the shoulders and stretch the arms.
- Having easy-to-grasp objects near (hanging from a simple frame over them, or close to the chair where they are sitting.)
- Putting a pillow under his head if the child is lying on his back.
- Put something shiny or colourful around the child's hand or wrist so they can look at it.



Hanging colourful and shiny objects above your child when he is lying on his back will encourage him to try to touch them with his hands.

Propping his head and shoulders up on a pillow will make it easier for him to move his arms.



Give your child colourful toys that make a nice sound, like a little rock in a drinking can, to encourage your child to keep touching and



Putting a toy which makes a nice sound in your child's hand will make him want to move his hands.

- Use sound/rattle toys to play with and hold.
- Playing hand and finger games and songs. Move the fingers and play clapping games.
- Encourage play with water, dough, dry rice, finger paint, and sand clay.

As the child gains manipulative skill help further development by doing cutting, drawing and writing activities with crayons, pens, scissors, glue, coloured paper and magazines. Also puzzles, matching games and self-help activities such as doing up buttons, pouring water from a container, washing clothes in a bucket – all these help strengthen hands, arms and increase hand-eye co-ordination.



Playing in the sand feels nice on your child's hands. It will make them want to explore other ways they can use their hands.



Playing with blocks will help a child learn to use his hands better. It will also help them learn to play with other children.



Involve your children in making things like kava cups, weaving, plaiting, beating and painting tapa.



Puzzles are a good way to help children learn to use their hands, as well as being good fun.