

What is hand control development?

- Hand control is the ability to coordinate individual finger movement with the whole hand.
- It is the ability to move fingers and use utensils, tools and small items without dropping them.
- It requires body and shoulder strength.

Why is developing hand control important?

- It develops strength and motor control in individual fingers and the whole hand.
- It develops the precise movements required in many fine motor tasks (cutting activities, managing clothing fasteners, etc.).

How does developing hand control help?

- It improves the use of the different sides of the hand.
- It allows the child to hold an item in their palm while still using fingertips.
- It allows for the fingers to move an item within the child's grasp.

A child who struggles with hand control may show the following:

- Changes in their pencil grasp often or a tight pencil grasp
- Slow printing with pencil pressure that is too light or too hard
- Trouble holding and using scissors or turning the paper while cutting
- A tired hand when using a pencil or scissors
- Whole hand use rather than using just a few fingers to manipulate an object
- Dropping of items rather than carefully placing them
- Trouble fastening buttons, securing snaps or tying shoelaces
- Trouble keeping inside the lines when colouring due to poor crayon/pencil control

Practice the following activities to help develop hand control:

- Opening containers or unscrewing lids
- Relay racing while holding small item(s) cupped in the palm of the hand
- Tying and untying multiple knots in a shoelace
- Playing games that involve moving the thumb opposite to the fingers, such as turning letter cubes or turning puzzle pieces



Roll playdough or putty into a long snake. Pinch dents into the 'snake' along the entire length.



Place clothes pegs onto a string or a stick.



Make confetti using a single hole punch.



- Cut through 3 or 4 layers of paper or playdough.



- Use spray bottles, wipe and wring out washcloths.



- Roll dice in palm of hands.



- Crumple paper into balls.



- Roll small pieces of putty/playdough.



Move one item, such as button or coin, from fingertips to palm and back to fingertips.

- Helping with lifting tasks (bringing in and unloading groceries, pulling a wagon, etc.)
- Shoulder strengthening activities like wall push-ups, regular push-ups and animal walks



(Bear walk)



(Lizard crawl)

- Activities while on hands and knees or laying on stomach (colouring, puzzles, drawing, etc.)

