

Fine Motor / Visual Perceptual Activities

To promote in hand manipulation:

These activities will help with pencil, cutting as well as abilities with fasteners.

- Place various sized objects on table (pennies, buttons, tokens, etc). Encourage Luke to pick up objects using the dominant hand only. He has to pick up the items one at a time and nest them within his palm.
- Have Luke transfer nested items in palm, moving one object at a time to the fingertips. Have him push the items through a resistive opening (such as a cut out in a coffee container lid).

To promote writing skills / letter formation:

- Use sidewalk chalk to form letters / shapes. Retrace or erase the letters using a wet paintbrush.
- Encourage writing in a game like atmosphere (for points or stars based on performance).
- Continue to write in different mediums with fingers, such as: shave cream, sand, pudding, finger paint, etc.

Scissors skills / Thumb opposition:

These activities help ready the hand for tasks that require thumb opposition, such as opening fasteners, securing scissors or a pencil.

- Use a spray gun to water plants.
- Use an ear bulb / syringe and have Luke blow a cotton ball across the table. Have races with a sibling or an adult.
- Use small tongs or tweezers to pick up various sized objects. This can even be used outside to pick up different kinds of leaves or grasses.
- Explore games like “Operation” that require the use of tweezers.

Finger Isolation:

- Place different colored stickers on each finger. Ask Luke to make the “red finger” touch the thumb and so on.
- Play “Where is Thumbkin” or similar finger movement songs.

Hand Dominance Suggestions (for at home and in school):

In an effort to help the student determine the appropriate hand to secure tools with, he / she may need assistance with understanding the left and right sides of the body. The following are only suggestions and are to be implemented only if feasible:

- Always present tools (pencils, scissors), at the midline of the student’s body so he / she can determine which hand to grasp the object with. Attend to which hand he / she tends to use more often (as this will most likely be the dominant hand).

Help him / her to understand the right from left side of the body by:

- Each morning the teacher / therapist / parent(s) (or all involved) can ask the student “Will you shake my hand?” Provide initial assistance to make sure the right hand is used. When the right hand is in the adult’s hand, verify / validate this by saying “I’m shaking your right hand”. Look for the student to begin offering the right hand without prompts.
- Use lotions, scented oils or water. Ask the student “Can I shake your hand?”, shake his / her hand, offer verbal feedback that it is the right hand. Place the medium on the right hand only (for additional sensory feedback / information). Tell him / her that you are placing water, lotion , etc. in the right hand. Add a variety of mediums to address tactile defensiveness, however try to make it a pleasurable experience by using a firm, warm grasp.
- Repeat tasks like this upon the beginning of each day / session. Soon he / she will be able to easily identify the right from left hand. This is also essential for flag salutes as well.
- Again, this is not to force him / her to use his right hand as the dominate hand, rather it’s to help reinforce and form the ideas of right versus left / directionality.