



Play and Leisure Functional / Manipulative Play

Bilateral Hand Use

An important stage in the development of fine motor skills is the development of bilateral hand use. This is the use of two hands together to grasp and manipulate objects. This stage of development starts with bringing the hands together in the midline and develops to using one hand as the dominant hand and the other as a helping hand.



It is important when focusing on fine motor skills that your child is well supported and sitting in a stable position.

This will free them up to use their hands: even if you do not see your child propping with a hand in sitting, they will be using their arms and hands to balance. Examples of this would be sitting in their high chair or car seat and sitting on your knee.

With most activities start off doing them hand over hand with your child.

Activity Ideas

Clapping rhythms and action songs – start with songs where both hands do the same thing and with lots of clapping. Ideas would be 'Clappa Clappa Handies', 'Wind the Bobbin Up' (words below), 'Twinkle Twinkle', 'Incy Wincy Spider'.

Start by doing any of these hand over hand with your child:

- Large items e.g. a balloon or ball – your child will need two hands to hold this. You can make the activity more interesting by having balls of different textures, tapping rhythms or making vibrations on the balloon.
- Treasure box – have a box with objects/toys of different sizes and textures inside e.g. wooden spoon, sponge, hair brush, plastic necklace, silk scarf, koosh ball, cotton wool, different sized balls etc. Encourage your child to explore the objects, tip the objects out of the box and put them back.
- Water play – use a ball in the bath to splash, encourage splashing with two hands and floating bath toys or cups which are large enough to need two hands to lift.
- Toys to bang together e.g. bricks, toy men, musical toys - one for each hand!
- Activities with cause and effect e.g. bursting bubbles, musical toys.





Wind the Bobbin Up

**Wind the bobbin up
Wind the bobbin up
Pull, pull
clap, clap, clap!**

**Wind it back again
Wind it back again
Pull, pull
Clap, clap, clap!**

**Point to the ceiling
Point to the floor
Point to the window
Point to the door
Clap your hand together
1, 2, 3
Gently place them on your
knee**



ONE
TWO
THREE