



FINE MOTOR



IN-HAND MANIPULATION

Advanced Activities

This resource has been developed by a team of occupational therapists at Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children. The information and activity ideas included in this handout were compiled based on current research and expert clinical opinion.

Definition: In-hand manipulation allows us to move or reposition small objects using just one hand. An example would be moving coins one at a time from our palm to our finger tips, in order to put them into a slot.

To develop these skills, it is best to practice activities regularly. If you are not sure which exercises to use or how often they should be done, please talk to your occupational therapist.

Most of these activities should be done with one hand only. Encourage your child to do these activities without using their other hand, body or table to help.

Palm to fingertips while holding an object (move one object at a time from palm to fingertips):

- **Filling containers:** Work quickly to fill a piggy bank, jar, or other container that has a slot, before the time runs out. Small objects like coins, bingo chips, colored tiles, or cut up straws will work best. Have the child place the objects in their palm first. Then, using only one hand, they should slide each object to their fingertips, one at a time, before placing it in the container. Start with two objects and increase the number of objects as the child's abilities develop (up to 5). This activity can also double as a sorting or counting task. To make the task more challenging, make the opening smaller.



Activities involving several types of in-hand manipulation:

- **Nuts and Bolts:** Have the child place a few nuts in their palm. Then, using only one hand, slide each nut to their fingertips, one at a time, rotate the nut and then place onto a bolt. Next, while continuing to hold the remaining nuts in their palm, screw the nut fully onto the bolt. Start with two nuts and increase the number of nuts (to 5) as the child's abilities develop.



- **Bracelets and necklaces:** Create bracelets and necklaces by threading beads or cut up straws into a pipe cleaner or sturdy string/lace. Have the child place the small beads in their palm first, then using only one hand, slide each bead to their fingertips, one at a time, before rotating it and then placing it on the pipe cleaner or string. Start with two beads and increase the number of beads the child can hold (to 5) as the child's abilities develop.



References:

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