



HAND STRENGTHENING

Why is grip strength necessary?

The ability to use our hands effectively within activities is a skill that we learn through play. Hand skills can be affected by grip strength. Reduced grip strength can significantly affect our independence within activities, resulting in us needing to rely on the help of others. Activities that are important for children which require grip strength include play, holding cutlery, dressing and managing fastenings, teeth-brushing, holding a cup, developing pencil control, opening packets and lunch boxes.

Suggested activities to develop grip strength:

Select a couple of activities from the following list to practise rather than attempting them all. Try to do a few activities per day, following the little and often principle.

Play time:

- Construction toys that have to be pushed together and pulrled apart i.e. snap beads, stickle bricks, Lego
- Tearing and scrunching paper using two hands.
- Making large shapes with paint, chalk, water on an easel, this will encourage shoulder girdle stability.
- Shopping and building games which involve carrying items from A-B
- Playing with play dough or plastecine – searching for buttons that are hidden in the play dough, squeezing the dough in each hand, roll out a sausage and pinch between fingers
- Clipping pegs around the lid of a container or helping to peg up paintings, pretend play – hanging up clothes
- Texture rubbings i.e. leave, coins, tree bark stencils.

Everyday activities:

- Squeezing sponges in water using two hands together
- Ringing out the flannel using two hands
- Baking e.g. holding bowl and stirring, rolling out pastry
- Opening containers
- Helping to hang out the washing
- Encourage your child to pull apart orange segments, pull off grapes from the stalk, take off the green strawberry leaf, unwrap individual cheeses, open containers.

