



VRANCH HOUSE

Ideas to Help Develop Bilateral Integration Skills

This is the integration of senses and the co-ordination of the two body sides is an important foundation for the development of many gross and fine motor skills.

It is essential to the development of cerebral specialisation for skilled use of a dominant hand. The child typically progresses from performing simultaneous movements with both sides of the body to reciprocal movements e.g. marching. The final stage is where the child is able to do different movements with each side of the body at the same time (i.e. cut with scissors, write with a pencil). This leads on to the child being able to cross their midline i.e. doing things on the opposite side of their body.

Good bilateral integration is important for eating, writing with pencils and cutting with scissors. These activities all have a 'helping hand' and a 'doing hand'.

Children learn to co-ordinate both body sides when they skip, gallop, walk, run, play rhythm games, jump, ride a scooter or bike, play sport or swim or manipulate toys such as beads, Lego, dressing up, cars, dolls.

Functional Implications:

- Child often adjusts his body to avoid crossing the mid-line e.g. swaps hands.
- Hand dominance is not well established.
- Difficulty co-ordinating one hand while the other hand is doing something else.
- Child often switches hands during fine motor tasks
- Lack of rhythmic movement

Activities to Develop Bilateral Integration:

1. Messy play (e.g. finger painting, shaving cream foam, water or sand play) using two hands together.
2. Play dough activities/clay/plasticine - e.g. pulling it apart, pushing objects into it, covering one hand with it so the other hand has to remove it, rolling with two hands together, or small balls rolling in both hands.
3. Threading large beads, buttons, cotton reels or macaroni onto laces or straws or pipe cleaners, or simple hand sewing or tapestry/weaving.
4. Construction kits with plastic or wooden nuts and bolts (e.g. or interlocking pieces (e.g. Duplo, Lego).
5. Toys that are made up of different parts and can be pulled apart with two hands.
6. Magnet activities - pulling magnets apart or pieces from magnets.
7. Throwing and catching balls of different sizes, rolling ball with 2 hands, bounce a large ball against a wall (e.g. beach ball), throwing balls or targets, etc.
8. Bat and ball games: rounders, baseball, cricket, hitting a suspended ball with a bat.
9. Jumping with large ball held between ankles.
10. Pulling a person or being pulled while lying on a scooter-board/mat.
11. Using a long cardboard tube with both hands to bounce a balloon around the room.
12. Stacking large cardboard boxes e.g. shoe boxes, Russian dolls or barrels.
13. Clapping/tapping games with hands (e.g. pat-a-cake) or action songs
14. Musical instruments that can be played using two hands together e.g. drums.
15. Pretending to drive a car using two hands to steer the wheel.
16. Wind up toys that require stabilisation in one hand while the other turns the crank, e.g. 'jack in the box'.
17. Fastening clothes, doing up zips, buttons or press studs.
18. Opening containers such as jars or plastic containers which require holding with one hand.
19. Cooking activities – holding a bowl with one hand, whisking with the other.
20. Obstacle courses - wheelbarrow walk / skipping / animal walks / jumping.
21. Tug of war games, Swimming, riding a bicycle, horse riding.
22. Trampoline jumping - scissors jumps/star jumps.
23. Scissors activities such as cutting out shapes or between lines.
24. Paper folding - origami / paper planes / tearing long strips of paper / crushing up newspaper.
25. Using templates or stencils for drawing round.
26. Car cleaning or window cleaning.

If you would like more information, please contact the Therapy Department Vranth House School & Centre
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