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Hand dominance

Hand preference usually starts to develop by the age of 3 years.

Hand dominance should be fully intact by the age of 5 years 6 months old. By now your child should use 1 hand, dominantly, for all of the tasks he performs.

If your child is still switching hands to perform tasks there might be an impairment with laterality and/or midline-crossing.

Poor laterality has a negative influence on bilateral integration (using the 2 sides of the body together to perform 1 task) and/or fine eye-hand coordination.

Approximately only 1% of the population is truly ambidextrous – in all the other cases impaired laterality is present thus a child ends up with 2 unskilled hands.

To determine if your child's dominance is fully intact let him perform the following tasks and note which side he prefers

Hands:

- Put pegs into a peg board
- Switch on a light
- Point to an object
- Take an object out of a cupboard
- Draw a line using a ruler
- Erase a line
- Unlock a padlock
- Open a door
- Turn a key
- Touch an object on a wall
- Cut with a scissor
- Catch a ball with 1 hand
- Bounce a ball with 1 hand
- Hold a telephone
- Throw a ball using 1 hand
- Write his name
- Open the lid of a jar
- Pick object off the floor
- Use a knife and cut clay
- Use tweezers and pick up small objects
- Thread objects onto a shoelace



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Feet

- Kick a ball
- Take your shoes off (which foot first)
- Hop on 1 spot
- Stand on 1 leg
- Kick a ball into a target
- Use your toe and point to an object on a wall

Eyes

- Look through a key hole
- Close 1 eye with 1 hand (the open eye is the dominant eye)
- Close 1 eye



If you observed that your child is still swapping his hands while doing activities and your child is in Gr. R, please take him to be evaluated by an occupational therapist.



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