

Hand Skills Overview

Our hands are remarkable in their design and function. We can use our hands to hold and manipulate a variety of objects and devices in ways that no other primate can. Using our hands is an important way that we interact with, and learn from our environment. Sometimes, however, individuals experience delays or difficulties in the development of mature hand skills and this can affect their experiences and growth.

Hand function is dependent on a number of factors:

1. We need good grip strength and upper body strength and stability - the larger muscles in the trunk, shoulder, arm and forearm provide strength and stability to lift, hold, push and pull.
2. We also need to develop control and strength in the small muscles of the hand. This enables us to position our fingers and move them in very delicate and controlled ways necessary for writing, managing buttons, etc.
3. We need to receive sensory information about the position of our hand and fingers so that we can automatically adjust for changes and control objects without having to look at our hand. We also receive important tactile and temperature information as well.

