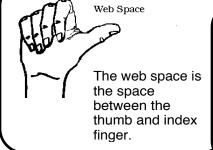


Hand Skills Overview

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.
- We need to recieve 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.





The web space is important because you must be able to keep it open and round like an "ok" sign in order to perform small and accurate movements with tools such as a pencil. Encourage students to use a "pad to pad" pinch when they are picking up or manipulating objects. The web space should not become closed.



The wrist position is usually neutral (straight) or slightly bent up in order to allow for the most accurate movements. This position helps to align the pads of the thumb and index finger for accurate movement and positioning.



There are also arches in the hand that give it the rounded shape and help to position our fingers for accurate use.

The thumb, index and middle fingers need to be able to perform small accurate movements while the ring and baby fingers provide support for the hand. This means that the ring and baby fingers should not move while printing, drawing or cutting with scissors. Instead, they should be tucked into the palm of the hand.

