

## In-hand manipulation activities

### What is it?

In-hand manipulation activities use the small muscles in the hand. First try moving the items into and then out of their, have the child hand.

### Translation

- Translation – Moving an object from the fingertips to the palm
- Getting a coin out of a change purse, one at a time
- Crumpling paper, tissue, cellophane to make an art project
- Playing games with chips, marbles and pegs



### Palm-to-finger translation without stabilization

- Moving a coin from palm to fingers and placing in a gumball machine, bank or meter
- Moving a small object and placing in a container
- Moving a lid from palm to fingers and placing on a jar
- Catching a gumball in palm, from a gumball machine, and moving to fingers
- Moving a golf ball from palm to fingers and placing on a tee
- Playing string games (e.g., cat's cradle)
- Placing nuts and washers onto bolts
- Move a penny or coin from the palm to the thumb and index finger. Then, try moving it back to the palm. Keep other hand behind back or in pocket.

### Palm-to-finger translation with stabilization

- Holding several coins to place into bank, parking meter or gumball machine
- Putting one utensil/tool down when holding several in hand
- Holding marbles and rolling one at a time into hole on "Chinese Checkers" board
- Holding a handful of jelly beans, popcorn or raisins and eating them one at a time
- Holding *Skittles* and placing on outline of a simple picture
- Placing Bingo chips on game board while holding others
- Holding a variety of dried beans and sorting them by type
- Placing "Mancala" (African stone/bead game): Use an egg carton for game board and beads or stones for game pieces
- Plant marble "seeds" in the sand or plant real seeds
- Try picking up pennies one at a time and storing them in the same hand. Thumb and index finger is used to pick up, and the last 3 fingers to hold the pennies.

### Shift without stabilization

- Adjusting pencil or fork

- Removing wrapper from a straw
- Playing “Pick-Up Sticks”
- Removing a crayon from box
- Buckling a shoe or belt
- Gathering a sock before putting it on
- Eating an ice cream cone, long hoagie sandwich or licorice
- Threading a needle and pushing the needle through tough fabric
- Playing travel size “Connect-Four”
- Adjusting chopsticks while eating popcorn
- Signing manual alphabet, eg. m, n
- Separating, fanning and dealing cards
- Flattening a small ball of clay between pads of fingers
- Stringing beads (shifting string)
- Buttoning
- Moving a cookie during eating
- Rubbing paint or chalk dust off pads of fingers
- Using one hand to open a collapsible fan
- Forming “Origami” figures and paper airplanes
- Lacing a shoe
- Folding doll clothes
- Moving paper using non-dominant hand while cutting paper figurines or patterns
- Shifting paper during hole or shape punching
- Moving sticks while playing “Kerplunk”
- Snapping fingers
- Unrolling paper ribbon from roll or stamps from stamp dispenser
- Balancing and rotating a jar lid filled with water on your fingertips
- Passing a pencil down a row of children by shifting it
- Sprinkling activities using seeds, glitter, dry jello or sand
- Building molecules using toothpicks and styrofoam balls
- Moving straw out of a plastic sports bottle
- Linking paper clips together to make a chain



### Shift with stabilization

- Holding a pen and pushing off the cap
- Holding several miniature marshmallows in hand while using toothpicks to assemble a marshmallow snowman
- Holding a toothpaste tube and squeezing the toothpaste from the end to the opening

- Holding key ring and shifting one key for placement
- Moving paper for cutting
- Decorate a paper plate like a lily pad and make spring clothespin alligators: Shift the plate while attaching the alligators around it.
- Holding a small flashlight and turning it off and on using switch
- Hold cards in one hand and use other hand to sort



### Simple rotation without stabilization

- Removing and putting on a small jar lid
- Rotating dials on radio, combination lock or “Etch-A-Sketch”
- Rotating puzzle pieces for placement in form board
- Spinning “turn” dial on board games
- Sharpening a pencil or crayon in a small hand-held sharpener
- Turning nuts and bolts at toy workstation
- Twisting “twist ties” on bread bags
- Spinning a small hand top, Dreidel or “doodle tops” (with markers)
- Rolling clay to make small beads
- Eating corn on the cob or an apple around the core
- Opening a glue stick
- Turning the stick while apple dipping
- Rolling hair onto curlers
- Playing with a “Rubik’s Cube”
- Rolling and pulling taffy
- Turning a kaleidoscope
- Turning a Rolodex: Write activities on cards and have child turn knob to remove a card



### Simple rotation with stabilization

- Holding a small puzzle piece while rotating another to fit into form board
- Holding a key ring and rotating correct key for placement
- Holding a small flashlight and turning it off and one using rotating switch

### Complex rotation without stabilization

- Rotating a pencil for erasing
- Rotating “egg timer” for board games
- Flipping over playing cards
- Turning over fluid/sparkle-filled magic wand or a fluid-filled pen
- Lacing holes in a lacing board and turning the board over end-to-end
- Playing “Numbers Up” game

- Hair braiding (under)
- Eating an ice cream sandwich, end-over-end
- Turning playing cards end-over-end, such as in “Concentration”
- Twirling a baton
- Twirling pretzel rods during snack time
- Flipping over “Fisher Price” people
- Turning popsicle sticks marked with happy/sad faces, numbers and words end-over-end
- Flipping a two-ended tip pencil, each tip having a different color, and coloring a picture.
- Twirling pencil around in hand

**Complex rotation with stabilization**

- Holding paper clips and turning over to clip onto papers
- Rotating two dice around each other in one hand.

*Adapted from a handout by S. J. Amundson – In Hand Manipulation Skills (1995)*