

TOPIC: BILATERAL COORDINATION & CROSSING MIDLINE

DEFINITION: Bilateral coordination refers to the ability to coordinate both sides of the body at the same time in an organized and controlled a manner. Good bilateral integration/ coordination is an indicator that both sides of the brain are effectively communicating information. "Crossing the midline" is an integral skill related to bilateral coordination. Crossing the midline refers to the ability to spontaneously cross over the midline of the body during motor completion/ functional tasks- moving one hand, foot, or eye into the space of the other hand, foot, or eye (i.e. sitting with legs crossed, scratching the opposite elbow, successfully intersecting lines to draw a cross- without switching hands, reading left to right, etc.). A child should master the ability to cross midline by the age 3-4 years old.

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Have difficulty completing daily living tasks (dressing, tying shoes)
- Decreased ability to complete fine motor activities (examples: stringing beads, buttoning)
- visual motor tasks (drawing, writing, cutting, catching/ throwing)
- Decreased ability to perform gross motor activities (crawling, walking, climbing stairs)
- Appear clumsy
- Overly cautious with movement and/or fearful with feet off ground (tossing in air, swinging, etc.),
- Seek (or avoid) deep input or be too rough with peers/ toys (wrestling, crashing, carrying/ pushing/ pulling heavy objects)
- Difficulty establishing hand dominance; tends to alternate hand use when coloring, writing, eating, throwing, etc.

RECOMMENDATION FOR SERVICES:

- Seek a consult or evaluation with an occupational therapist if you feel your child is exhibiting underdeveloped bilateral coordination skills and has significant difficulty crossing midline.

WHAT TO DO AT HOME:

- Bopping a balloon back and forth
- Playing games to encourage use both hands- toss & catch
- Tearing/crumpling paper
- Connecting/ separating construction toys; magnetic blocks, Mega blocks, pop-beads, Legos
- Playing with toy instruments; banging drums, triangle, symbols
- Pinching, pulling, squeezing, play-doh (finding hidden objects, etc.); as well as using the play-doh "tools"
- Playing with a Zoom Ball
- Stringing uncooked pasta on yarn or beads on pipecleaners/ string
- Snipping/ cutting with scissors- yarn, string licorice, play-doh, construction paper (thicker), coupons, etc.
- Lacing activities/ games- i.e. use hole punchers with craft projects and have the child lace string/ yarn through the holes
- Mr. Potato Head
- Frosting cookies with a butter knife, spreading peanut butter on crackers/ toast