

TOPIC: UPPER BODY STRENGTH & STABILITY

DEFINITION: A child must have core muscle strength and stability in order to have adequate postural control. Having postural control along with shoulder stability allows for arms, hands, and fingers to move with precision and control to perform fine motor tasks. Upper body strength is typically tested manually using a muscle manual test. Hand and finger strength is typically tested with use of a dynamometer and pinch gauge.

CHARACTERISTICS of DECREASED UPPER BODY STRENGTH & STABILITY:

- Poor posture- Examples: slouching when seated, always seems to be leaning against something, shoulders slumped forward
- Frequent propping of head on hand during writing/coloring tasks
- Difficulties maintaining a pencil grasp
- Fatigue during short coloring or writing tasks
- Excessive clumsiness/Poor coordination
- Does not have the endurance other children their age have during activity
- Shies away from playground equipment and/or gross motor activities
- Seems weaker than other children his/her age

RECOMMENDATION FOR SERVICES:

- Seek a consult or evaluation with a therapist who is experienced in making home programs if you feel your child is exhibiting significant weakness or clumsiness.

WHAT TO DO AT HOME:

- Encourage your child to color
- Encourage your child to play outside on playground equipment at a school or park
- Play games using spray bottles
- Encourage your child to complete cutting activities and use of hole punch
- Encourage your child to play with play dough or clay
- Encourage your child to use large tweezers to pick up small items, squeeze clothespins, crumple paper into balls
- Play games that incorporate gross motor movements and use of arms (wheelbarrow walking, animal imitation games, tug-of-war)