

## Bilateral Motor Coordination

**Bilateral motor coordination** refers to the coordinated use of the two sides of the body and implies good connection between the two sides of the brain. A child first coordinates the use of the two sides of his body *symmetrically* (as in pat-a-cake) and then coordinates them in a *reciprocal or asymmetrical* manner (as in climbing a ladder). Bilateral coordination gradually leads to an awareness of the two sides of the body, selection of one side as dominant (laterality) and a sense of left/right discrimination (directionality). Therefore, the development of bilateral coordination is necessary not only for the coordinated use of the two sides of the body, but also related functions, which depend on it.

### Symmetrical Bilateral Activities:

- \* Throwing, catching, hitting a ball with two hands
- \* Using a rolling pin with clay, dough, putty, baking
- \* Jumping with both feet together
- \* Using two hands together to propel a scooter board or ride toy
- \* Jumping jacks
- \* Clapping games
- \* Pop beads, snap toys
- \* Simon Says

### Reciprocal or Asymmetrical Bilateral Activities:

- \* Crawling games
- \* Pulling hand over hand in a tug of war game, to pull while on a ride toy
- \* Wheelbarrow walking
- \* Hopping from one foot to another
- \* Swimming
- \* Climbing a ladder, up the slide, etc
- \* Riding a bike
- \* Twister
- \* Hokey Pokey
- \* Scissor activities
- \* Cutting food
- \* Etch a Sketch
- \* Nut and Bolt manipulation, games with pieces that have screw tops/lids
- \* Activities where one hand is required to stabilize while the other performs the activity--coloring, blocks, painting, stringing beads, motions for songs such as the itsy bitsy spider/ wheels on the bus, opening jars, fastening clothing, etc.

**Laterality** means the development of an awareness of the body's two sides and the selection of one side as dominant-- left or right handedness.

**Directionality** is a sense of right and left projected onto other objects in space. Before a child can project left/right onto objects and into space, they must have firmly established laterality. Poor laterality and directionality concepts may lead to difficulty in writing letters and numbers characterized by reversals. A child may also have difficulty following left to right on a printed page as he reads or may have difficulty organizing his written work on a blank paper from left to right. A child with

inadequate laterality and/or directionality concepts may need to work on bilateral motor coordination first.

It is important to begin first with the child's own sense of left/right and to have that firmly established and then begin to project left/right to objects and into space. Provide verbal and visual cues.

**Activities to enhance laterality/directionality:**

- \* Wear a watch or ring always on the same hand and verbalize 'it is on your left hand'
  - \* Wear a sticker on the back of the hand when playing, verbalizing 'the sticker is on your right hand'.
- Be consistent. Do not put the sticker on the right hand one day and then on the left another.
- \* Play Twister, Hokey Pokey, Simon Says or any games that require r/l discrimination

*Once the child knows right/left on himself, begin to project onto objects and space:*

- \* Setting table by putting the fork on the left, the knife/spoon on the right
- \* Doll play, dressing by putting in left arm, right leg, etc
- \* Puzzles identifying right and left sides--the piece goes on the left side
- \* Writing, Drawing starting on the left side of the paper, using cues such as a sticker, green line etc. if needed
- \* Give directions when playing to turn right, turn left, etc.