

**Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.**

## Top tips: Hand-eye coordination

**Hand-eye (or eye-hand) coordination links visual and physical development and starts from a very young age. As babies learn to develop focus and curiosity they begin to reach for objects.**

Helping children to become adept at a range of visual movements and linking these to physical movements will support them to use cutlery, get dressed, write, play sports, woodworking and so much more.



Check out these top tips for ideas to support the children in your setting:

1. Use a staff meeting or training session to share information about the development of eye control and physical control, using these top tips to help you
2. **Fact:** Eye control develops prior to physical control. Babies develop the ability for visual fixation (focus and concentration), visual tracking (following a moving object with their eyes) and visual scanning (such as finding a favourite toy from a selection)

**Top tip:** As a staff team, consider the activities which encourage children to develop visual skills. Examples include watching a ball as it rolls across a table from left to right and from right to left (tracking) and finding items in picture books (scanning) and pointing to them (fixation)

3. **Fact:** Many babies' and children's hands will only meet the 'midline' (the centre of the body). Crossing the midline with their eyes and hands encourages more complex coordination and manipulation and improves communication between the two hemispheres of the brain, leading to greater cognitive and physical development

**Top tip:** Again, consider opportunities you provide for developing skills to cross the midline, e.g. reach for a toy while lying on their backs, transfer items from one hand to the other, draw long lines on the floor or on long paper strips from left to right and right to left, touch left foot with right hand and right foot with left hand, etc.

4. **Fact:** While babies and young children initially move symmetrically (both sides of the body moving at the same time) opportunities to use one side of their body at a time develops 'bilateral integration' which encourages manual dexterity. Using each hand for different tasks while completing one

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integrated activity requires visual and physical coordination

**Top tip:** Review activities which encourage children to develop these skills, e.g. removing a screw top lid from a bottle, with one hand holding the bottle while the other twists the lid, hammering a nail with one hand and using pliers to hold the nail with the other hand, throwing a small ball with one hand and using a bat to hit it with the other, using a knife and fork and so on

5. Review the different stages of hand-eye coordination development, as in the table, below. Use this to plan activities and ensure babies and children are being provided opportunities to progress with their skills.

Age of child	Examples of hand-eye coordination skills
<b>Birth to 6 months</b>	Reaches for and grasps objects Moves objects from one hand to the other
<b>6 months to 1 year</b>	Picks up smaller objects using pincer grasp Touches objects with index finger Manipulates fingers independently, e.g. finger rhymes
<b>1 to 2 years</b>	Stacks 5 blocks in a tower Begins to scoop and pour more successfully Makes marks using one-handed tools Uses a spoon to eat Throws a ball using two hands
<b>2 to 3 years</b>	Manipulates smaller objects, e.g. turns pages in a book, makes deliberate marks, such as circles, inset puzzle pieces Begins to throw balls with one hand and to catch with two hands Begins to kick a ball
<b>3 to 4 years</b>	Arranges small objects where they want them to be Makes marks for a purpose with increasing control Begins to use a knife and fork Can dress and undress self, e.g. zips, mittens

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## NDNA products to support you with these tips

- Online course: [Visual Perceptual skills](#).

And more resources at [www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna](http://www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna)