

SUGGESTED PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR BILATERAL COORDINATION

Bilateral motor coordination refers to the ability to use the two sides of the body in a controlled movement pattern. In order to perform bilateral activities, good communication between the two halves of the brain is essential. Each side must be aware of what the other side is doing in order to cooperate to complete the task. For example, to cut a circle, the hand that is holding the paper must have feedback about the hand that is cutting so it knows when to rotate the paper for further cutting. Information about each side of the body is gathered and used to direct the total body movement (bilateral integration).

Bilateral integration leads to an awareness of the two sides of the body. One side is gradually selected as the dominant or preferred side (laterality). In addition, this awareness is an important component in forming directionality (sense of right versus left).

Therefore, bilateral integration is important for the child to experience success in motor play requiring coordinated use of both sides of the body. It is also important as a basis for development of related functions which are necessary for classroom performance.

Below are some suggested activities to encourage development of bilateral motor coordination.

- Angels in the snow or sand - child lies on back in the snow/sand and spreads his arms and legs out and moves them in at the same time
- "Bop Ball" - while holding both ends of a large cardboard tube, bat, or rolling pin, child attempts to hit a balloon or suspended ball
- "Basket Ball" - while holding large box or laundry basket in both hands, child attempts to catch the ball with the box
- Propelling scooterboard with both hands or a combination of hand and leg movements
- Crawling through obstacle courses - through, over, under, between furniture, boxes, barrels or whatever
- Pulling self up an incline with rope using hand over hand-can do same while sitting on a scooterboard or skateboard
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Animal walking - crab walk, seal crawl, elephant walk, donkey kicks, bunny hops
- Throwing, catching, or hitting a large ball with two hands