

Activity		Hand strengthening exercises	
Key:	Due the various abilities of our children we have graded some of the activities into different levels.	Contact details:	schools@cdssgroup.org.uk
Seeds	Your child may access different levels depending on the activity as well as their ability.		All Education Advocates access this email.
Saplings			Sarah Larkin (Cheshire West)
Trees			Becky Harris (Cheshire West)
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Brief description of Activity

Children with Down syndrome general have less strength in their hands and fingers than their peers, this means many tasks take longer to master.

Fine motor skills are important for many everyday activities such as dressing, feeding, holding objects and for writing. Today we have included some hand strengthening activities which will support these fine motor skills. Children will need to develop strength in their hands and fingers before we can expect them to write

Resources needed

See activities

Activity - Seeds

Before children can control the muscles in their hands (fine motor skills) they need to be able to control the larger muscles in their arms, controlling their shoulder, elbow and wrist movements. Big muscles help the little muscles so any activities that involve large movements will support these skills such as:-

Washing windows or the car. You will need different sized sponges and a bucket or water.

Children will make large sweeping movements that will strengthen the shoulders and elbow movements.

Fill a bucket with warm water and place different sized sponges inside. Encourage your child to squeeze water out of the sponges and wash the car/windows etc with you. Different sponges need differing amounts of squeezing! The larger the sponge the harder to squeeze.

Practise painting with no mess. Get a paint brush and a bowl of water and 'paint' outside. Great on a sunny day as its dries quickly and you can start again.

Activity – Saplings

Moving objects with kitchen tongs.

For this activity you will need kitchen tongs and small, light objects such as pom poms.

Place small, fairly light objects onto a tray and give your child some kitchen tongs to pick them up and move them to another tray. Use tweezers and smaller objects to repeat the game (please supervise as needed)



Collect a selection of things that require manipulation of some kind to make them work, fill them with water and use outside on a sunny day.

Washing up liquid bottles, soap dispensers, spray bottles are all great practice for squeezing and pushing. Obviously only use items that haven't contained chemicals beforehand and make sure they are well rinsed out before use.



Clothes peg number game.

You will need clothes pegs, cardboard, pictures of something your child likes (e.g. dinosaurs) to stick on the card, Numicon if you would like to use it.

Print out or draw dinosaurs/animals or something your child likes and stick them onto some card. Write a number or stick/draw Numicon shape onto the picture.

See if your child can place clothes pegs onto the card to match the number or Numicon frame. e.g. number/frame 6 = 6 clothes pegs.

Threading is a great activity for promoting fine motor skills.

If you haven't got anything at home, then try using spaghetti and threading on some Cheerios or threading shoelaces through penne pasta.

Watering the plants

Using a misting water bottle filled with water, ask your child to water the house or garden plants/mist the leaves. The squeezing action is good for strength and grasp.

Alternatively fill a bowl with water and give your child a jug to fill and refill. The pouring action takes a degree of control, you could do this daily by allowing your child to pour their own drink or putting milk in a small jug for them to pour onto their cereal.

Dressing skills

Finding a selection of clothing items that might fit a large doll or teddy with zips, large buttons or poppers would make great practice for dressing skills.

Zips on old bags or clasps on purses etc make excellent practice too.

If your child is just beginning to dress themselves then help them to get started and then encourage them to finish off e.g. put on socks and encourage your child to pull them up, once they have mastered this then stop at the heel and encourage

them to finish off from this stage. Connect the zipper on their coat and encourage your child to pull up the zip.
There is a great flip trick that you can use to enable children to put their own coats on, watch the link to see it in action.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9Hohc3mkjA>

Activity - Trees

Practise tying shoelaces.
It helps to colour in one half of the lace with a marker to make it a different colour and allow your child to distinguish between the two sides of the lace.

Sit side by side so you have the same perspective and can help your child mimic your actions. Hold an untied shoe between your upper legs or knees. The shoe should be facing away from you so that it is in the position that your own shoe would be in if you bent to tie it.

Instruct your child to hold one end of the shoestring in each hand. Everything you tell them to do, you should also do so that they can copy you.



There are many demonstrations on you tube, this is a tricky task but a great one to try and master if your child/teenager likes shoes with laces and needs to be able to take off and put on their own shoes independently.

Attachments

N/A

Cheshire Downs Syndrome Support Group

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