

Development of Hand Dominance

3 to 5 months – a child will reach out with either hand and will start to use both hands together. Generally one hand will reach out and the other move to join it in the midline of the body.

6 months – 1 year – a child will transfer objects hand to hand, both hands will appear to be equally skilled. Some preference may appear but the child will swap hands before settling to using one hand more than the other.



1 – 2 years – it may become more obvious that the child mainly uses one hand to hold objects and moves the other hand to steady them.

2 – 3 years – a child may continue to swap hand preference as no true dominance has yet developed.

4 – 6 years – a child will have settled on hand dominance and is either left or right handed. Some children may be ambidextrous but will use one hand consistently do certain tasks like writing or eating.



A child will arrive at their own handedness but can then be encouraged to develop their manual dexterity by developing a hand preference. Swapping objects hand to hand at this age makes it harder to develop fine motor skills

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