

### **Building Upper Extremity Awareness**

Development of upper extremity awareness is as important in the development of functional upper extremity skills. Sensory awareness, visual awareness and physical movement will contribute to developing better use of his arm and hand.

#### **Building Visual Awareness**

Give him verbal and physical cues to keep his hand within his visual field at mealtimes, and playtimes.

Run toys up and down his left arm, so that he will look to his left side more.

Place stickers up his left arm, have him remove the stickers with his right hand.

When sitting at the table, present all toys/activities in the centre of his body and encourage both hands to be on the table.

#### **Building Sensory Awareness**

Rub different textures up and down both of his arms. Start with a texture that he will tolerate well, perhaps a familiar blanket or teddy. Then progress to more unfamiliar textures, sheepskin, wool, corduroy, etc. You can even use toys.

Encourage him to watch what you are doing to build visual awareness as well.

Rub lotion on both his arms. Encourage him to rub in the lotion on his left arm with his right hand.

Use vibrating toys on both arms, play tickle games, encourage looking to his left side.

Use water play – pour different temperatures of water over both arms. Encourage him to pour water with his right hand over his left side.

#### **Building Awareness of Physical Movement**

Try above activities with his left arm in different positions, eg. by his side, above his head, arm out to the side.

Assist him to do the two handed actions of songs and rhymes.

*If you have any questions, please contact your Occupational Therapist.*

355 Lark Street, Chatham, Ontario, N7L 5B2

Phone: 519-354-0520 Fax: 519-354-7355

[www.childrenstreatment-ck.com](http://www.childrenstreatment-ck.com)

Do passive range of motion at the shoulder (to the front, to the back, out to the side and over head), elbow (bent, straight), wrist (bend forward, bend back, turn over) and fingers and thumb (open, close).

Verbally and physically cue him to use two hands for activities (he may need physical cues to start). Keep the expectation lower to start, for instance helping him just touch the activity with two hands. Then he can perform the activity as he likes. When a new activity starts, again cue “two hands” and physically cue to assist him to touch the activity with two hands.

Use praise to reinforce him using two hands (even if it is just having his hands up on the table or touching an activity/toy with physical cues).