

Determining a Student's Hand Dominance for Teachers

Name _____

Teacher _____

Date _____

Materials Needed:

- 30 manipulatives and a small yogurt container with hole cut in lid for manipulatives
- deck of cards
- pegboard/pegs
- stopwatch or watch with a second hand

Sit facing student and present all materials at midline (the center of the body).

Keep in mind that when dominance is established, the dominant hand is used to pick up items and the non-dominant hand is the "helper hand" which holds or stabilizes. Some children do not develop hand dominance until as late as 8 years old.

Suggested activities:

1. Spread the 30 manipulatives across the desktop to the child's left and right. Set the yogurt container on the desk at the center. Have the child pick up the manipulatives one at a time and put them into the yogurt container. Time how long it takes the child to put the manipulatives into the container. Ask them to try the activity with both the right and left hands. Note the following and circle your observations:

a. Does the child pick up the yogurt container? No Yes With which hand? Right Left
If the child picks up the container to hold, this is most likely their non-dominant hand.

b. Which hand is used to pick up the manipulatives? Right Left Both

c. Does the child cross midline or the center of the body? Yes No With which hand? Left Right

d. Does the child hand a manipulative from one hand to the other? From: left to right From: right to left

Children with midline or rotational difficulties will pick up the manipulatives on the non-dominant side with that hand and pass it off to their dominant hand. On the dominant side, they will pick up the manipulatives with the dominant hand and put it straight into the container. Of course, this needs to also be weighted in conjunction with which hand is most fluid in moving objects.

e. Time to put manipulatives into the container: Right _____ Left _____

2. Have the child hold the deck of cards in one hand and deal out as many cards as they can in 15 seconds.

Number dealt with right hand _____ With left hand _____

The student has smoother motions dealing with: Right hand Left hand

3. Put the pegboard and pegs at the child's midline. Time the child putting pegs on the board for 15 seconds (have the child hold the pegboard still with the hand not used).

Number of pegs placed with right hand _____ Smoothness of motion? _____

Number of pegs placed with left hand _____ Smoothness of motion? _____