

STRATEGIES TO HELP MINIMIZE HAND TREMORS

Occupational Therapy

Hand tremors can be present for many reasons. The following strategies may be helpful in preventing shaky hands so that your child can participate in their activities.

Seating

- Ensure appropriate positioning when sitting, including at their desk in the classroom. This will facilitate improved use of hands and arms for fine motor and printing activities. Therefore, ensure that your child has a desk and chair that is of appropriate height for them – with feet flat on floor (or supportive surface like a foot stool) and arms resting on top of desk/table without hiking of the shoulders. Refer to “Posture” handout for strategies on how to improve this.

Upper Extremity Function

- Sometimes hand tremors are because of weaker shoulder stability or low muscle tone so strengthening of the arm and hand muscles can help. Shaky hands can also be caused by difficulties with proprioceptive skills - our sensory processing skill that helps us know where our body is in space. Activities that help develop upper extremity strength and proprioception skills include playing with resistive toys (toys that require some effort to push together and pull apart like Legos and Kid K'nex) as well as “heavy work” activities (activities that provide increased pressure in the joints like doing the “bear crawl”, climbing on play structures, pushing heavy objects). Refer to “Hand and Upper Body Strength” for additional activity ideas.

Weighted Items:

- If appropriate seating posture and arm/hand strengthening doesn't help reduce hand tremors, and if shaky hands are making it difficult for your child to do fine motor tasks like writing, then weighted items may be helpful.

- Weighted items may help improve proprioception and control, as well as provide pressure to reduce hand tremors.
- There's a variety of available items which include:
 - Pencil weights and weighted pens and pencils
 - Weighted hand glove or sleeve
 - Weighted utensils.

Weighted items are available on many websites including www.toolsforkids.ca

Fine Motor Accommodations

- Use of thicker writing/colouring tools (ex: primary pencil) can help by making it easier to hold.
- Use of shorter writing/colouring tools (ex: short PipSqueak markers) can also help as they are easier to control.
- Use of a standard keyboard instead of a laptop/Chromebook keyboard can sometimes be easier.
- Use of a mouse instead of the trackpad on a laptop can sometimes be easier because it's their whole hand controlling the mouse instead of just their isolated finger on the trackpad.