



## Two-Handed Play Activities

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*Note: Some of these ideas involve the use of small items and should only be used with children who no longer mouth objects.*

- Bristle blocks, magnetic blocks, Velcro blocks, Tinker Toys and Duplo blocks are great for pulling apart and putting together at midline.
- Velcro play food is also lots of fun to pull apart with two hands.
- Many toys such as those the child winds up, require one hand to hold the toy and one hand to activate it.
- Stacking cup toys require two hands. One to steady the base and one to stack on top.
- Dumbbell rattles, bells, and hand-held musical instruments give a quick response while encouraging the use of both hands.
- Musical instruments such as accordions, cymbals, drums and sticks, and triangles need both hands to produce sound.
- Catch and throw games of all types encourage two-handed play. Try squishy balls, pillows, bean bags, etc.
- Paint, shaving cream, and pudding are great to use for finger painting with two hands while increasing tactile stimulation as well.
- Plastic or wooden ring towers or toys that stack encourage the use of both hands.
- Play-Doh can be rolled with a rolling pin for wonderful finger, hand and arm strengthening and two-handed play.
- A funnel or sieve can be held with one hand while pouring beans, rice, sand, or water with the other. Also, pouring water or other materials back and forth from two cups or bowls is a fun way to encourage two-handed coordination.
- Stretch dolls that are made to be stretched and offer resistance to increase strength of both arms and hands.
- Wrap and unwrap items around the house to make pretend presents. Cutting paper, wrapping, taping, and tying bows are all opportunities for using both hands.
- Play tug of war with old scarves or soft rope.



## Two-Handed Play Activities ...*(continued)*

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- Place hand puppets and finger puppets on both hands. Encourage the puppets to talk to each other and play with each other. Put on a puppet show using a big, old box as a theater.
- Make a "parachute" out of an old sheet. Have the child hold on with both hands and together raise the parachute "up high" and "down low". Put light weight balls on the parachute and bounce them around. Because more than one person must participate, it is also great for learning cooperation.
- Rocking toys, riding toys, toy shopping carts, and trikes all encourage the use of two hands to hold on.
- Have your child lay on his or her back. Hold an object about 12 inches over the child and encourage the child to grab or swat at the toy at midline.
- Tool sets with nuts & bolts, saws and hammers encourage the use of two hands.
- Using tape and Band-Aids to "fix" things prompts the use of both hands.
- Books can encourage the use of both hands. The child can hold down one side with one hand and turn the page with the other hand. If the book is a sound story, the child will push a sound button with one hand while holding down the book with the other hand.
- In circle games such as ring around the rosie, the children hold hands.
- Set up a course so the child can crawl and climb on hands and knees through tunnels and over obstacles.
- Put a large sheet of paper on the floor for the child to draw on while on his or her hands and knees. Have child trace his or her own hand.
- Dolls encourage two-handed activity while dressing, feeding, bathing, etc.
- Cutting with scissors prompts the child to hold the paper with one hand and cut with the other.
- Toys such as plastic links, plastic snowflakes, large pop-beads (manipulatives) encourage two-handed activity as the child tries to pull them apart and push them together.
- Fishing sets, whether magnetic or plastic, encourage the use of both hands.

Rhythm games such as clapping to music or popping bubbles are great fun. Sit crossed legged and have child sit in your lap. Use your arms to encourage the clapping motions.