

Index and Finger Isolation

What is it? Finger isolation is the ability to move each finger one at a time. Infants move all fingers in unison, as they develop they learn to move fingers individually. Children typically develop finger isolation between the ages of 9 months and 12 months of age.

Why is it important? : This is a prerequisite for developing good manipulative skills. It is also a basic method of communicating to an adult or another child

How you can help: Demonstrate to your child how to isolate fingers and encourage your child to use fingers individually or in pairs to play

- Offer you child plenty of every day opportunities to handle small objects (if safe and appropriate) to practice using their index finger to point and isolate fingers for play e.g. play finger soccer, use key pad gadgets see activities below
- Show your child how to isolate fingers.
- Ensure your child is sitting with a comfortable and supported posture (e.g. feet on the floor, and elbows resting on the table at a 90 degree angle) or is standing up at a vertical surface.

The following is a list of games and activities to help index and finger isolation:

- Push button toys – guide hand to press with index finger. Use a press button telephone or an activity centre with buttons. Guide your child's hand to poke his finger down on the buttons.
- Have fun pressing doorbells or light switches
- Small hollow cylinders are great to put on index fingers, encouraging the child to take them off and put them back on again, e.g. Smartie tubes. You can also put Hula Hoops on individual fingers.
- Try tying a ribbon around index fingers to make your child is aware of them. Some mini stickers could also be used in this way.
- Poking fingers into playdough. Books with holes for fingers are also fun, 'The Hungry Caterpillar'
- Finger puppets – made out of paper or old fingers cut off gloves.
- Use tweezers to pick up things and eye droppers to paint
- Pick- up sticks
- Making finger trails in sand or on steamy windows. Shaving foam on a tin tray or formica surface is fun too.
- Playing finger games – 'Two little dickie birds' or 'Round and round the garden', 'incy winsy spider'.
- Finger painting
- Pick up small items with wet fingers
- Peel stamps and stickers
- Water play with spray bottler and water squirters
- Tear paper

