

Fact Sheet

Tips for Home or School: Grasping Aids

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For many children grasping is difficult or impossible. As a result, participation in a wide variety of play, daily living, and academic activities can be affected. Various grasping aids are available commercially or can be homemade to facilitate children's involvement in activities.

The grasping aids that are highlighted below can be used with writing and drawing implements such as pens, pencils, markers, crayons, and paint brushes. The aids can also be used with cooking utensils such as spatulas and large mixing spoons to help children participate in cooking routines at home or snack routines at school. Grasping aids can also assist children to grasp personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, hairbrushes, or combs with handles. These are only a few examples of how grasping aids can facilitate children's participation in everyday activities.

In making decisions about grasping aids it is important to involve an occupational therapist (OT). The occupational therapist might also have suggestions on how to refine the grasp over time so that grasping aids do not continue to be needed.

The following grasping aids can help individual participate in a wide variety of activities. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list:

- Commercially available pen/pencil grips. A variety of shapes, sizes, textures, and colors are available from stores or specialty companies. Some of these grips will also fit skinny crayons and markers to assist with grasping. Pens and pencils with built-in grips are also available.



- Foam stress balls. Like pencil grips there are a variety of stress balls. Hold the stress ball firmly and shove the desired item (must have a sharp tip) through the ball.



- Foam pipe insulation. Pipe insulation comes in various sizes. Cut the desired length of insulation and use the "pipe" hole for the item. Secure the insulation with tape or glue if needed.

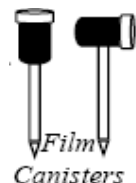


- Masking tape. Take the tape and wrap it around the implement as many times as necessary to get the desired shape and size.

- Foam hair curlers. Foam hair curlers come in a variety of sizes. Remove the plastic fastener and use the hole for the desired tool.



- Film canisters. Poke a hole on the bottom or the side of the canister. You might want



to glue the lid in place.

- PVC pipe. Use the pipe to provide a low cost T-grip. The item to be grasped might have to be glued in place.

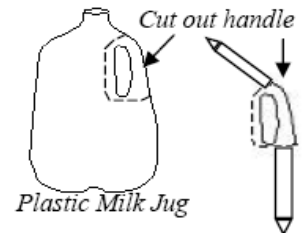


- Velcro sensitive gloves. Many knitted and bath gloves are sensitive to the “hook” side of Velcro. Self-sticking Velcro “hook” (hard, plastic side of Velcro) can be adhered to various items in a location that works best for the individual’s grip. The Velcro on the implement will “stick” to the glove worn by the individual.
- Adapting other gloves. If you want a glove that is not as hot as a knit glove, you can adapt a gardening glove. Similar to the knit glove, you attach Velcro to the object to be grasped. You attach the opposite piece of Velcro to the glove in an appropriate location (at the fingers, on the palm, or even the back of the glove) determined by the item to be grasped.

- Commercially available card holders. When we think of playing any type of card game, we think of grasping the cards. Card holders can be held in your hands or placed on the table. Using a card holder allows for easier organization of the cards.



- Plastic jug handle. Cut the handle from a plastic milk jug. The handle will have a “fat” end and a “skinny” end for different size utensils. Consider other types of plastic jugs (liquid laundry soap) for larger grip needs. Again, the implement might have to be glued in place.



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*Fact Sheets from the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project are to be used by both families and professionals serving individuals with vision and hearing loss. This information applies to children and youth, birth through 21 years of age. The purpose of the Fact Sheet is to give general information on a specific topic. More specific information for an individual student can be provided through personalized technical assistance available from the project. For more information call (303) 866-6681 or (303) 866-6605.
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