



Crossing the Midline

What is it?

Crossing the midline is when the hand or foot from one side of the body moves over to the other side of the body to perform a task there. Young children do not tend to cross the midline spontaneously and will pick up an object on the left side of their body with their left hand and an object on the right side of their body with their right hand. Being able to cross the midline automatically and smoothly is an indicator that the left and right sides of the brain are making connections via the corpus callosum, which is essential for learning and movement. Also, when a child can cross the midline, they will use their preferred hand more consistently which means they will get the practice required to develop dexterity and accuracy required. Children who have difficulty crossing the midline may get 'stuck' mid-reach and have to switch hands to continue or they move their whole body to avoid crossing the midline.

How to develop it

- Playing cars on a large path – encourage use of preferred hand to drive the car
- Use large paint brushes and rollers to 'paint' the side of the house with water
- Wash the car – encourage use of preferred hand
- Practice windmills – bend to touch hand to opposite foot then stand upright and repeat with other hand and foot
- Wiping the bench or a whiteboard clean using preferred hand
- Balloon volleyball with preferred hand
- Draw a large sideways 8 (infinity sign) on chalkboard or concrete driveway and have child trace over it repeatedly
- Twister
- Place stickers on one arm and encourage child to remove them with their opposite hand
- Ribbon wands – make ribbon circles and patterns using the wand