

Date:



Dear Parents:

Your child is now showing good control of his hands. He can move them up and down, make them go quickly or slowly and use them gently or with more force.

Now it's time to learn when and where to use those skills. When should hands move slowly, quickly, gently or forcefully? When should they be in different places? We now need to help your child know when these things are appropriate. That way, the he can figure out when it's okay to let loose a little bit and not worry about control and when he needs to keep his hands in check.

What's important for your child and your family?

In order to begin working on this, we need to know what is important to you and your child.

Think about situations **at home**. When should your child keep his hands in certain places? For example, you may want your child's hands still until everyone is seated at the dinner table—that way your child won't grab his favorite food. Think about what would be most helpful at meal times, when getting ready in the morning or going to bed at night. What changes would you like to see in your child? How about during play time or other home activities? You might want your child to raise his hands when getting his t-shirt on, hold them back to wait to take a treat, be gentle when taking a toy from another child or strong when closing the car door. Please jot your ideas down on the form on the next page.

Now think about when your child is out **in the community**... at malls, grocery stores or other public places. What does your child normally do with his hands? What would you prefer? You may want your child to hold your hand at the mall or keep his hands inside the shopping cart at the grocery store. Add as many ideas as you want to the form below.

Once you have written in at least a few ideas in each column. Please

Promoting self-regulation at home and in the community

Catch your child using self-regulation. Whenever it happens, try to notice. It's not easy, though. In order to notice self-regulation, you have to think about what could have happened. You might notice that he flipped through a book gently without tearing it or that he didn't hit his friend when the friend was bugging him.

When you notice your child controlling himself, say something like, "You really controlled your hands. Well done!" To emphasize increasing self-regulation, occasionally add a comment like, "You really know how to control your hands. Nice job."

Always keep it positive.

send it back to us so we can start working on these things. Please don't work on the things you put on the list just yet. We want to try them out and see what strategies work best. We'll send the list back to you with some ideas and suggestions.



Helping your child improve self-regulation

What if your child does not control his hands?

We are helping your child learn so please DON'T tell him what to do. It's much more effective to prompt him to think for himself.

If your child forgets to control his hands, stop and ask him, "What do you need to tell your hands?" That will prompt him to think and then to take control of his own body. By having him search through his own memory bank for what he needs to do, you are helping to make his learning more solid.

Also, we find that using the phrase "tell your hands" helps children understand they are in control of their bodies. It can also make some children feel better about themselves because it's just their hands that forgot—not them!

How I want my child to control his/her hands in these places:
(carefully describe the situation and what you would like to see your child do)

| At home | In the community |
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My hands stay together when I wait.