

Hand-Under-Hand: Things You Might Want to Know

Question	Answers
<p>I'm having a hard time keeping the student's hands on mine to show him how I cut food. I can't hold his thumbs with my thumbs and cut at the same time. What can I do?</p>	<p>You have not yet trained him to "observe" with his hands. Do that first.</p> <p>Get a hand lotion program into his daily schedule.</p> <p>Also start this part of his HUH program with something that is easier for you; one that is not a high skill level even if he is an older, able student. Cutting food and shoe tying are much too high skill and dexterity level for first time experiences.</p> <p>Start with something that is also more highly motivating, either new or familiar for the student.</p> <p>Or, start with something which he only needs to refine. Use an already successful task that he needs to be aware that there is a more mature, graceful or efficient way to do it. For the above example and setting, it might be his spoon or fork grasp, or napkin use.</p> <p>When he has learned how to "watch" with his hands, and enjoyed or benefited from it, then reintroduce observation of cutting.</p>
<p>She drew her hands back from mine as I started to reach for the ice cream maker to explore it. I think she is tactilely defensive. What can I do about that?</p>	<p>This sounds more like a learned, self-protective response rather than tactile defensiveness even if there is a history of tactile defensiveness.</p> <p>Tell her, or proceed with the attitude of: "You are in charge. You just watch me. You don't have to touch it. You are in control."</p> <p>Restore her hands on top of yours and proceed.</p> <p>Honor your promise. Do not deliberately remove yours from under hers, do not prompt or cajole her to feel it herself.</p> <p>When she is ready, she will decide to feel for herself. Curiosity will get the best of her and her hands will drift off of yours to explore. Trust the human internal drive and curiosity.</p>
<p>I can't get near the student when I try to help him with food. He fights me off. How can I get started?</p>	<p>He probably does not behave this way for other activities that are less emotionally charged or have a high interest and curiosity for him. Use a different task first. Earn his trust by respecting his interest and his internal drive.</p> <p>The first stage is to get them used to putting their hands on someone else's hands as a means of getting information. Use a fun, enjoyable activity first.</p>



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<p>I am afraid to get behind her to help her button her coat. She butts people with her head. How can I show her how to button?</p>	<p>The student will clue you.</p> <p>You will feel or see them begin to seek more information about what you are doing.</p> <p>You will feel or see them anticipate what will happen next, e.g., slide toward the next button and button hole.</p> <p>They sometimes actually start taking over and trying to do it themselves.</p> <p>They will verbally or behaviorally tell you, "I can do it myself!"</p> <p>Remember, if they show a readiness and the buttons and buttonholes, for example, are too difficult for them to learn on, you must "sensory enhance," i.e. enlarge, the task. Adapt a vest or smock with big buttons and vertical buttonholes. See buttoning hand-out.</p>
<p>We have a student who constantly touches people. We're trying to stop this behavior. Why would we want to do this kind of an approach that encourages touching?</p>	<p>This student probably needs touch information. Perhaps you now have a way to make it acceptable, meet his needs and decrease other inappropriate touching.</p> <p>If he can't keep his hands on yours because his hands are drifting around exploring your body, ask him "Can I help you keep your hands on mine so you can learn" Someday you will be able to do this yourself." (If the student cannot process spoken information, try the following...)</p> <p>Use your thumbs to gently hold his thumbs.</p> <p>Be sure that you are starting with an interesting, motivating task with no performance demands yet.</p> <p>It is my expectation that this method offers the potential for such students to become more grounded in the physical world, and more competent. An annoying behavior such as inappropriate touching will no longer be needed.</p> <p>Start with the Hand Lotion program.</p>



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<p>I don't have a lot of regular contact with students. Is it hard for staff in my position of having a limited time frame in which to accomplish a task, to have the patience to allow a student to use this method?</p>	<p>Yes, when you are working with students who have not learned this method and who have not otherwise mastered spatial concepts, problem solving and hand skills, you may not be successful. You don't have the time and the student has no foundation for using this method.</p> <p>Have parents and other regular staff get the program started (with Hand Lotion program in his daily schedule) Once they establish this way of learning, your job will be easier.</p> <p>Teach parents and other regular staff the other aspects of a Hand Under Hand program so that the student gets the daily practice. Then you can introduce new skills to the student and his family or educational staff more easily.</p> <p>If a child has usable hearing, later on you may not even need Hand Under Hand because spatial language will be more meaningful and we will be more successful talking them through a task.</p> <p>We all get caught up in getting the task done and we rush the students by telling them what to do or by picking up their hands (Hand Over Hand) to manipulate them through the task.</p> <p>We rob students of learning experiences all the time. It will appear new to you because you are changing old habits, too.</p>

