

# Crossing Midline

## What is crossing midline?

Crossing midline refers to the ability to reach across the center of the body with the arms or legs to perform a task. This skill is essential for developing hand dominance, coordination, and efficient motor movements. It involves using both sides of the brain, promoting communication between the brain's hemispheres, which is crucial for tasks such as reading, writing, and other complex activities that require bilateral coordination.

Encouraging activities that promote crossing midline can significantly benefit children's overall development and help in building foundational skills for more advanced physical and cognitive tasks.

## How can a decreased ability to cross midline impact function?

You may notice the following in students with midline crossing delays:

- challenges in developing a dominant hand
- delayed skills such as shoe tying or catching a ball.
- difficulty reading across a page
- difficulty writing across a page
- dressing skills may be difficult
- can affect the ability to perform tasks that require precision and coordination of both sides of the body with one hand being the stabilizer and one hand being the manipulator, such as cutting with scissors

## Can delays in crossing midline be improved?

Yes! Engaging in activities that encourage reaching across the body can help strengthen the neural pathways necessary for this skill. Games requiring reaching with one hand to the opposite side, such as playing catch, drawing large figure eights, or participating in sports that involve swinging or throwing. By frequently practicing these activities, children can enhance their ability to cross the midline and improve coordination, hand dominance, and cognitive skills related to reading and writing.

Info sheets created with ❤️ by occupational therapists for parents and teachers.