**Hand-under-hand exploration**

**Why use this technique**

Some children are resistant to trying new activities. They will pull their hands away and won’t want to touch. Respect the message your child is giving you and consider this, would you want to place or put your hands on/in something you did not want to?

However, if they are never encouraged to try new things they may not ever expand their understanding and interest in the world around them. Therefore, hand under hand exploration helps to initiate exploring in a less invasive way than hand over hand.

**Hand under Hand**

When using hand under hand if possible work from behind your child so that your hands and his/hers will be moving in the same direction. If they are little and it is appropriate, sit them on your lap. When older, sit behind them or next to them and reach your arms around theirs.

Before you show the child how to do something using this method, it is really good practice to try it yourself with your eyes closed. Pay attention to the steps you are taking to do the activity, you will then be able to describe it better to the child.

When you use the hand under hand technique, your hands perform the activity while your child’s hands rest on top of yours—in this way the child can feel what your hands are doing. If the activity is new to your child and they are hesitant to try it, they may feel more secure touching your hands rather than the unknown object or activity. Also, because their palms are on your hands, the child will be able to focus their energy on feeling the movements of your hands. Research has shown that children still receive much tactile feedback in this way. The child may also feel more comfortable and in control because they can freely remove their hands if that is what they want to do. As you perform the activity, verbally describe what you are doing with your hands and then slowly remove them to encourage the child to explore independently instead when they feel ready to do so.

**Examples**

Place the child’s hand on top of yours;

* When manipulating playdough, plasticine etc.
* When exploring different textures/sand/messy play
* When ripping things – experience the physical movement pulling tearing without having to touch
* When forming new signs – model it by placing their hand on top of yours