

Leading (dominant) hand



What to know:

Babies start out using both hands together to explore and touch things: this is called **symmetrical movement**, part of the **homologous** pattern discussed earlier. In during infant-toddler years, he will begin to use his hands separately: left hand to explore things on his left side, and his right hand to explore things on his right side, part of the **homolateral**, or *one-sided* pattern. As he continues to grow, he will develop the ability to use both hands in the same task—in the **midfield**—but doing different things: holding down the paper with one hand, while the other draws with crayons.

Paul Dennison coined the term *midfield*. It's the space right in front of the learner, where his two hands meet to accomplish tasks, and where his two visual fields overlap.

Eventually, after the child has developed cross-lateral integration—through activities like crawling—he will settle into primarily using his **dominant** hand for key tasks. The other hand will develop a supporting role.

People who have mixed leading elements—right-handed, and left-eyed, or left-handed, and right-eyed—may have a greater than normal issue with the “directionality” aspects of reading and writing. However, this is true only *if they are not operating in a cross-lateral state*. These confusions often fall away once their brain hemispheres are teaming.



What to check:

- Which hand does the learner write with?
- Is this the hand he always wrote with, or was he encouraged or—even forcibly switched—to write with the other hand? The hand he was initially inclined to write with is likely his dominant hand, regardless of which one he actually uses.
- Does he consistently use the same hand for writing, or does he switch back and forth?
- Does he use a different hand for “precision” tasks (like writing), versus “power” tasks (like swinging a hammer)?



What to do:

- Note this information, to use in understanding the learner’s overall “wiring” pattern.
- Do not attempt to change a child’s hand dominance. A whole array of distressing and confusing behaviors are correlated with having handedness forcibly changed, not least of which are language expression issues, including stuttering.

