

Activities to promote scissor skills

Using scissors to cut is a complex task! It requires a number of movement skills including hand eye coordination, use of both hands together, shoulder stability, balance and the ability to isolate movements of the fingers and thumb!

Children are usually ready to start cutting by the age of three.

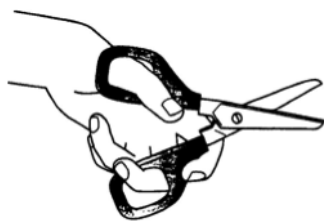
The basics

Before starting cutting practice ensure that the child is:

- **sitting** with his or her feet flat on the floor
- using **two hands** - one hand should hold the paper while the other cuts
- **looking** at what they are doing - this is essential!

Scissor grasp

The correct scissor grasp is with thumb and middle finger through the loops. The index finger should be placed on the underside of the scissors as it assists in directing the cutting movement whilst also providing support. The thumb should be pointing to the ceiling.



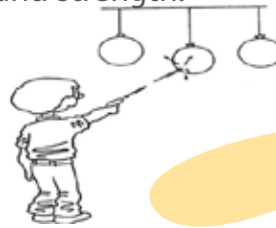
Games for pre-scissor development

If your child needs more practice to be able to hold the scissors properly, and to open and close them these activities will help develop the hand skills required.

- Tearing and scrunching paper for paper mache work or collage pictures.
- Squeezing empty plastic bottles to make

bubbles in water, or to blow feathers and ping pong balls across the table.

- Using finger or glove puppets.
- Use salad servers or tongs to pick up cotton wool balls or plastic toys from a bucket and to transfer them into another container in a relay race.
- Play dough - rolling and pinching to make animals and cakes.
- Finger rhymes eg Incy Wincey Spider, two little dicky birds, five little ducks.
- Lego and construction activities.
- Swinging from monkey bars in the playground and holding on when swinging are good for hand strength.



- Using water pistols or squeeze bottles with water to spray foam off balloons or make bubbles in water uses the squeeze action required to operate scissors

Scissor activities

Snipping

- Snip plastic straws into pieces and thread them onto wool to make a necklace.
- To work on scissor control:



- start with 2cm wide strips of paper, with wide sections coloured in. Get your child to make their snips within the coloured sections

Improving lives

- gradually reduce the width of the area they have to snip in until it's the thickness of a felt tip pen line. When they can do this they are ready to progress!

Consecutive cuts

Once the child can snip with control, move onto making consecutive cuts in a forward direction.

- Lanterns - fold paper in half, make a series of cuts to half way up the paper, open and fold to make a lantern.
- Place stickers at various points 1cm, 2cm, 3cm from the edge of the paper, to cut to and stop at. Make pictures with stickers to cut out.

Changing direction whilst cutting

Once the child is able to cut forward in a straight line, they are ready to start cutting simple straight line shapes eg the square, the rectangle and then the triangle.



These shapes consist of straight lines the child has already learned to cut but require them to change direction.

- Once the child has mastered cutting straight line shapes, progress to curved shapes.
- Semi circles drawn on the edge of paper, then onto full circles.

Extra tips!

- Use a variety of textures and weights of material for cutting practice eg aluminium foil, cooked spaghetti, clay, flower stems, thicker papers can sometimes be easier to cut when learning.
- Encourage your child to look at the hinge of the blades of the scissors, when cutting, rather than the tips, as this is where the cut will be made from.
- If your child has difficulty opening and closing the scissors to cut, try some that help by springing open again themselves.
- (The Early Learning Centre do scissors that

can flip between being springy and normal).

For further information please contact our advice email oxl-tr.otadvice@nhs.net

Greenwich Community Health Services
Children's Occupational Therapy
Goldie Leigh
Lodge Hill
Abbey Wood
London
SE2 0AY

T: 020 8836 8621
F: 020 8311 0870

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