

PRE-SCISSOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The ability to use scissors involves eye hand co-ordination. Children may have difficulty acquiring cutting skills if they have not had an opportunity to develop their fine motor skills or to use scissors before entering school. Activities to help develop their fine motor skills include:

- Encouraging child to rip and tear paper.
- Using tools that require open-and-close hand movements: tongs or tweezers to pick up and release objects, squirting water or liquids using spray bottles, ear drop bottles, etc.
- Practicing object manipulation while having the child tuck their ring and little fingers into their palm (or hold a small object in place, such as a cotton ball or pompom) while their other three fingers are grasping another tool.
- Really good starter activities are to simply have your child:
 - Pick up blocks, etc., with salad tongs
 - Punch holes in paper with paper punch

Scissor Skill Development

Cutting with scissors looks easy, but it is actually a very complicated skill. Practice cutting play-dough using safety scissors first.

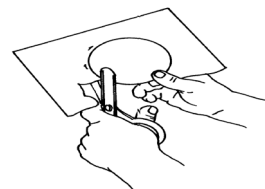
What can you do?

- Buy the correct size of child scissors. Scissors should have *small loop handles* to prevent the fingers from sliding through to the knuckles and must be *sharp* enough to actually cut. Fiskars© is a common brand available at many local stores.
- Always make sure your child holds their scissors properly.



Place the scissors in your child's preferred hand and show him or her how to place the thumb and fingers:

- Hold scissors with the **thumb** in the **top loop**.
- If there is one small loop and one large loop, the larger loop goes on the bottom.
- Position the index and middle fingers in the bottom loop or middle finger in the loop with index supporting the blade movement.
- Point scissors away from the body (not parallel to the tummy) with the wrist straight or bent back slightly.
- Keep scissors and work below the shoulders.
- Keep elbows tucked at the side of the body or supported on a table.
- Be sure that the hand holding the paper does most of the turning and moving. Keep the helper hand in a thumb's up position.
- Have your child keep the scissors straight, moving away from the body.
- **Right-handed** children should cut around a shape in a **counter clockwise** direction.
- **Left-handed children** should cut in a **clockwise** direction.



Choice of Paper

Start with heavier paper as it is easier to use because it can be held more easily (e.g. index cards, sandpaper, construction paper, card stock, and brown paper bags). Progress to regular paper.

Progression

Start with making snips or fringes. Then cut across 1" strips progressing to longer strips until they can cut across a page. Then practice targeting lines; start with thick and shorter lines and gradually decrease thickness/increase length. Progress to lines with a single angle then a large curve. Progress to shapes with corners, such as squares or triangles. To introduce the circle, practice half circle then progress to a full circle. Gradually increase the complexity of the shape by adding more change of directions.

Note

If cutting pieces off strips, the child can stick them onto a paper to make a collage. The following websites offer additional cutting activities:

- OT Toolbox
- Therapy Street for Kids

Other Strategies

- Use visual cues such as green and red dots to help the child remember when to start and stop cutting before turning the paper.
- Cut away excess paper.
- Cut slightly beyond the corner before turning the paper. Alternatively, when learning the child may cut one line at a time until they have learned to cut corners.
- Encourage the child to use small, controlled snips.
- Try using loop scissors or spring-loaded scissors for beginners.

Pre-scissor skills information was obtained from NEO Kids-CTC therapists. Other information is copied with permission from One Kids Place, North Bay (March 2020).