



Scissor Skills

Scissor skill development

It takes time and practice to learn how to cut with scissors. To be able to use scissors, small muscles and movements in the hand need to strengthen and develop.

Stages of scissor development

It is helpful to understand your child's stages of development to choose activities they can manage and enjoy.

1. Holds scissors
2. Makes a single snip
3. Holds paper whilst snipping
4. Cuts across paper. Start with a narrow strip of card then gradually introduce larger pieces of card
5. Cuts along a straight line. Start with thick lines then gradually introduce a narrower line.
6. Cuts along a curved line
7. Cuts around simple shapes (square, circle, oval, triangle)
8. Cuts around simple shapes with corners and curves (moon, heart, star)



Practise without scissors

Several activities without scissors can help your child to develop the muscles and movements required for cutting with scissors. These include:

- Squirting with trigger action spray bottles – aiming for a target such as a balloon or small container
- Using tongs or jumbo tweezers – picking up small objects such as pom poms, small Lego bricks, scrunched paper, dry pasta
- Punching holes in paper – using a single hole punch to punch out a line or pattern in stiff card or paper
- Playing with clothes pegs- placing them round containers to make fences, hang out paintings, drawings, dolls clothes, socks etc
- Using play dough- squeezing and stretching playdough, putty or plastecine



Practise with scissors

- Encourage your child to practise holding scissors so their thumb is on top.
- If this is difficult for them, try placing your hands over your child's hands to help them to develop the cutting action.
- It can help to start with thicker paper or card, such as construction paper, index cards or greeting cards. These are easier to cut because they hold their position better and do not slip as much as thinner papers. Once your child is cutting forwards confidently, try thinner papers such as paper bags, office paper or wax paper.
- Other materials can also be used in scissor practice, such as string, tape, fabric, play dough "snakes" or aluminium foil.

Other activity ideas

Your child might enjoy practising scissor skills when they are doing a special activity. Some easy activity ideas for early cutting experiences are:

- Cut paper lengths for paper chains.
- Cut fringes along a card or around a paper plate to make a lion mask.
- Cut different textured items for a collage, such as straws, card or coloured paper strips.
- Cut a picture into pieces to make a puzzle.
- Cut out pictures to paste.
- Snip small pieces of paper and use them to decorate pictures or post them into a small money box.
- Use scissors with different blade patterns (available in Tiger and WH Smiths).

Safety considerations

- Always supervise your child with scissors.
- Start with children's safety scissors- available from the Early Learning Centre and WH Smiths
- Make sure your child is sitting down to cut.
- Keep scissors in a place your child can't reach when you are not supervising them.

The most important thing is to let your child have a go and praise them for their efforts and creations.