**Scissor Skills**

Scissor skills take time for children to develop. Being able to use scissors to cut well is important for many preschool and school activities including art and craft. Children may have the skills to use small scissors by three to four years of age, but scissor skills are not fully developed until 6 years of age.

Stages of development from easiest to hardest: -

1. Ripping and tearing paper
2. Introduction of scissors – learns correct grasp
3. Cutting playdoh
4. Firm paper snipping along the edge to fringe
5. Straws to snip and cut
6. Strips of light cardboard (about 2cm wide)
7. Firm paper to cut along straight lines
8. Cut zig zag lines and curvy lines
9. Basic shapes – square / triangle
10. Basic shapes – circle

**Take time each Day**

* Make time each day to practise scissors skills for 10 – 15 minutes.
* Minimize distractions and interruptions e.g. turn off TV and radio, find a quite space in the house where you and your child can relax and focus.
* Make a scissor station at home include, card, paper, old birthday cards, stickers, pens and scissors.
* Make it fun, use your child’s interests to motivate them to complete cutting activities.
* Remember to give your child opportunities for practice each day.

**How to Hold Scissors?**

* Encourage your child to hold scissors in their dominant hand.
* Thumb through small loop, index finger outside of loops and middle finger in second scissor loop.
* Scissors in the hand supporting the cutting.
* Get your child to hold a piece of paper under arm pit to encourage keeping their shoulders level and arms by their side.
* Encourage helper hand (non-dominant hand) to rotate the paper / picture.

**Hints and Tips**

* It is important the child uses the appropriate scissors for their dominant hand (left or right-handed)
* Try demonstrating and providing verbal instruction to encourage thumb up.
* Use a sticker on nail of thumb to encourage thumb up.
* Your child will need to have a good sitting posture and arms free.
* Keep your sharp scissors out of reach.

**Developing a scissor grasp**

To develop a scissor grasp prior to using scissors practise fine motor activities, bilateral activities which encourage your child to use both hands together, for example, clapping games, catching a ball.

Pincer grasp activities encourage your child to use thumb and index finger together, for example picking up raisins, or sticking pompoms in a pot.

Try some of these activities: -

* Use tongs or tweezers to pick up pompoms and move them from one place to another.
* Tearing or scrunching paper for arts and crafts.
* Punch holes with a handheld hole punch.
* Try stapling with a handheld stapler.
* Play games outside or at bath time squirting water with a turkey baster or washing-up bottles.
* Squeeze sponges – make a car wash in the garden or bath for dolls.
* Playdoh – rolling a sausage, pulling both ends to make longer, pinching it with thumb and index finger all the way along.
* Hand and finger rhymes e.g. Incy Wincy spider, peter pointer and baby shark.
* Musical instruments – castanets, finger cymbals.
* Clothes pegs to put around a shoe boxes or see how many you can add to your clothes.

**Level 1 - Snipping**

Snipping activities practice opening and closing of scissors.

Start by snipping straws and placing into playdoh to make dinosaurs or hedgehogs, or and string to make necklaces or bracelets.

Snip cupcake cases to make flowers.

Use a kitchen roll and make small snips round the top to make hair, then use makers to make faces.

Roll playdoh into a sausage and practice snipping small pieces.

Snip / cut 2cm strips of card /paper these can be different colours to make a collage with.

**Level 2 – Straight Lines**

Cutting a straight line your child learns to open and close the scissors and move the paper with their helper hand. Start with short lines and firm card that is easy to hold.

Start by cutting across pieces of paper the lines will not be straight to start with.

Then draw thick lines on the paper for your child to cut along.

Punch a line with single hole punch and your child can cut along the line.

Cut strips of coloured paper and make paper chains with strips of coloured paper.

Make a Chinese lantern see link <https://youtu.be/6REBae7nwg0>

**Level 3 – Curves and Zig Zags**

As scissors skills improve your child will be able to cut curves this step involves being able to move the paper around with their supporting hand.

Zig zags may appear easy however your child needs to make a 90 degree direction change with the scissors each time.

**Level 4 – Changing direction and Shapes**

Children will need to learn to turn their scissors and the item they are holding to cut out complex shapes and pictures. Some children need extra prompts to keep their scissors **moving in a continuous motion.**

Make a scrap book by cutting out images and gluing into the book.

Make a wish list of things you child might like.

Snake Mobile – colour in the picture and then cut around the spirals, add string to hang.

Make snowflakes by folding a piece of paper several times and cutting different shapes out of it.

**Activities to support skills**

Practising fine motor activities can support the development of techniques and skills required for shoelace tying.

Bilateral activities encourage your child to use both hands together, for example, clapping games, catching a ball.

Pincer grasp activities encourage your child to use thumb and index finger together, for example picking up raisins, or sticking pompoms in a pot.

The internet has lots of activities you can use to help develop your child’s scissor skills.

**Adaptive scissors**

Children may require adaptive scissors to help develop there cutting skills.

Left-handed scissors Easi-Grip® scissors Long loop scissors

self-opening scissors push down table top Easi-Grip® long loop

Dual teaching scissors

Histogram

Description automatically generated with low confidenceExample Activity parent to cut strips and child to snip along each strip.

Shape, rectangle

Description automatically generatedShape, rectangle

Description automatically generatedShape, rectangle

Description automatically generatedExample activity get your child to cut along each line.

Example activity get your child to cut around each shape.