



Cutlery skills

Activities

The following two handed activities require similar skills as for cutlery use. They should be carried out with adult supervision.

- Ⓞ Colouring – steady the paper with one hand whilst the other colours.
- Ⓞ Construction games – E.g. Lego, bead threading, K'nex.
- Ⓞ Cooking / Baking – any two handed task, e.g. mixing bowl and spoon
- Ⓞ Hammering activities e.g. Tap-a-Shape, toy worktools
- Ⓞ Opening screw top bottles and jars.
- Ⓞ Using a dustpan and brush – keep the dustpan still whilst moving the brush.
- Ⓞ Using play dough / modelling material– use cutlery to cut.
- Ⓞ Using scissors – progress from easy to complex shapes. Please see 'scissor skills' advice sheet.



Preparation



- Ⓞ Sit with good posture. Please see 'sitting' advice sheet.
- Ⓞ Check the plate is steady.
- Ⓞ Use appropriate sized cutlery.
- Ⓞ Check the cutlery is held effectively, using index fingers on the top of the cutlery instead of grabbing with the whole hand.
- Ⓞ Expect some messiness and tearing of food until cutlery skills are mastered.
- Ⓞ Only expect a few minutes' practice initially and gradually build up to using cutlery for the whole meal.
- Ⓞ Consider practising at snack time, or towards the end of the meal when your child is less hungry and able to concentrate.

Practice



These ideas will help with practicing cutlery skills during mealtimes.

- Ⓢ Physical hand over hand help may help the child hold the cutlery effectively and feel the required movements of each hand.
- Ⓢ Start with cutting soft foods (mashed potato, fish fingers) and progress to tougher food (pie, meats).



- Ⓢ Slow down, stab food with the fork and then saw into bite-size pieces with the knife.
- Ⓢ Talk through the steps with clear simple commands.
- Ⓢ Give praise throughout.

Adjustments

The following items could assist with developing your child's cutlery skills however this list is not exhaustive. Please find purchasing information under resources.

- Ⓢ Caring Cutlery. This has moulded handles to promote efficient grip and placement of index fingers.



- Ⓢ Dycem. This non-slip matting will help stabilise the plate/bowl.
- Ⓢ Plastazote Tubing. This foam tubing can be slipped onto cutlery in order to thicken and soften the handles. It can help improve control over the cutlery.
- Ⓢ Plateguard. This plastic rim clips onto a plate so that food does not slide off.

