



Scissor skills

Activities

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

- ☉ Baking – using a rolling pin two hands together, mixing ingredients

with one hand and stabilising the bowl with the other, pinching the dough between thumb and middle finger, and then each finger in turn.



- ☉ Colouring – steady the paper with one hand whilst using the other hand to colour.

- ☉ Construction games – e.g Lego, bead threading, K'nex, pop beads.

- ☉ Hammering activities e.g. Tap-a-Shape, toy work tools

- ☉ Games – like “operation” using tweezers

- ☉ Opening screw top bottles and jars.

- ☉ Puppets – with a puppet between thumb and middle finger, open the puppets mouth slowly and close slowly and then alter: the speed of movements and; how wide the mouth opens.



- ☉ Using a dustpan and brush – keep the dustpan still whilst moving the brush.

- ☉ Using play dough / modelling material– with fingertips: pinch, squeeze, poke, twist and pull

- ☉ Tearing and scrunching paper – craft activities

- ☉ Tweezer, salad tongs and pegs play

- ☉ Water squirters – using middle finger and thumb squeeze the squirter so water hits a toy in the bath and see how far and in what direction it moves.



Preparation



- Ⓢ Sit with good posture. Please see 'sitting' advice sheet.
- Ⓢ Complete a muscle warm up activity, such as playing with play dough.
- Ⓢ Use appropriate sized and designed scissors. Tiny oval handled scissors might be easier to start with, or easi-loop self opening scissors
- Ⓢ Check the scissors are held effectively in the dominant hand. Ideal grasp is with the thumb (in the top loop of the scissors) and middle finger (underneath) in the loop of the scissors, the index finger on the outside of the handle (to stabilise) and ring and little fingers curled into the palm. Please see above picture.
- Ⓢ Expect some jaggedness and tearing of paper initially until scissor skills are mastered.
- Ⓢ Only expect a few minutes' practice initially.



Practice

These ideas will help with practicing scissor skills.

- Ⓢ Physical hand over hand assistance may help the child hold the scissors / paper effectively and feel the required movements.
- Ⓢ Encourage child to use 'thumbs on top'. Put stickers on thumb nails as a reminder.
- Ⓢ Start with making small snips only (e.g. lion's mane or flower stalks)
- Ⓢ Start with large movements and refine to smaller movements when cutting.
- Ⓢ Start with cutting play dough with plastic scissors.
- Ⓢ Start with materials that do not require much holding or positioning. e.g. straws, light cardboard, firm paper to fine paper. Then progress to different types of paper e.g. foil, newspaper, old envelopes.
- Ⓢ Use visual prompts to guide the cutting direction, e.g. cut between parallel lines or cutting between lolly sticks / string glued to the paper
- Ⓢ 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.

- ④ Scissor block – this may help the child focus on manipulating the paper rather than struggling with scissor technique.
- ④ Left handed scissors – essential for left handed cutters
- ④ Attach a bulldog clip to the paper to prevent paper scrunching
- ④ Easi-loop self opening scissors – helpful for weak hand muscles
- ④ Double loop training scissors

