

Learning to Use Scissors



Information for Parents, Teachers and Carers

Which children may need support with this?

The majority of children will learn to use scissors and progress with this skill, but for some children this can be more difficult. Here are some examples of children who may need support:

- Children with delayed motor skills
- Children with co-ordination or motor-planning difficulties
- Children with low muscle tone or altered muscle tone
- Children with hypermobility
- Children with reduced attention and concentration



For more information, please contact Occupational Therapy on:

For York and Selby Area: 01904 726599

For Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale Area: 01723 342357

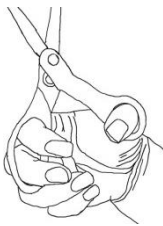
Pre-scissor activities

- Using tongs or large tweezers to transfer objects from one container to another / play games like 'Operation'
- Use a hand held paper punch to punch holes and create paper pattern
- Use a turkey baster or bulb syringe and squirt water from one bucket to another or squirt water in the bathtub
- Use a hand held stapler
- Squeeze squirt toys or water pistols with a trigger
- Pick up small objects with thumb and first and second fingers
- Squeeze clothes pegs onto boxes / laminated cards
- Squeeze toothpaste onto a toothbrush



Holding the scissors and body position

- Scissors should be held in the dominant hand
- The thumb should be through one handle and either the index or middle finger through the other handle (or both if a larger handle)
- The scissors should be held with thumbs on top, not facing the table
- The elbow should be tucked into the body and not out to the side
- Sitting down is the best position to practice scissor skills with feet flat on the floor
- Use a table that is an appropriate height – in line with the child elbows

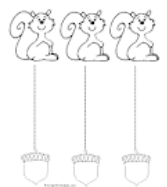


Holding the paper

- The stabilising hand should aim to hold the paper between the thumb (which should be on top of the paper) and the fingers (which should be underneath the paper)
- The grasp should be safely away from the cutting point but close enough to offer stability. For right handers – the grasp should aim to be in the left bottom hand corner and for left handers, the grasp should be the right bottom hand corner

Initial scissor activities

- Snip a tassled edge onto some card (with 'snips' the scissors are usually fully closed at the end of the action)
- Snip straws, old cards, old coupons
- Cut along bold lines 1-2cm wide to give children the satisfaction of 'staying within the line'



Helpful Hints

- Use recycled paper and card for cutting
- Use stiffer paper to start with as this is less floppy to hold
- Aim the scissors at a forward goal e.g. a picture or sticker
- Glue two lollypop sticks or two strips of raised paper in parallel on the page to cut between
- Punch holes in paper and cut along the dots
- Place stickers on or paint thumb nails as a visual cue to keep the thumbs 'on top'
- Encourage the child to hold a beanbag or cuddly toy against their body to get used to keeping their elbow tucked in
- Encourage right handed children to cut in an anti-clockwise direction and left handed children to cut in a clockwise direction
- Encourage the child to rotate the paper at changes in direction so that they are always cutting away from their body midline and not in a sideways direction
- The child needs to learn to grade / control the action of the scissors to prevent full closure each time. In a continuous forward action when cutting a straight line, the scissors do not fully close. This removes having to re-align the scissors back into the cut started.

Tell us what you think

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

For York and Selby Area: 01904 724366

For Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale Area: 01723 342472

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