

Developing Cutlery Skills – Older Children

- Using a knife and fork is a highly skilled task, requiring practice to build up two-handed (bilateral) coordination
- It also involves feeding, and can often become stressful, when a child is hungry or the adult is in a hurry. For this reason it is a good idea to practice outside of mealtimes, using play-doh or with food preparation to build up skills

Positioning

It is important to provide your child with a supportive position, so that their feet can be on the floor or if not, supported on a foot box, to provide a stable posture

Equipment Using cutlery with larger handles is easier to grasp

Caring Cutlery / Kura cutlery is an ergonomically designed set, available in Junior or a larger size, which facilitates a good grasp, with indents where the index fingers are placed.

'Caring Cutlery' and 'Kura' is available from a variety of suppliers, such as Amazon, The Complete Care Shop, and Homecraft.



There are two sizes;
Junior and Adult



- Using a shallow bowl is easier to scoop against
- Plastic cutlery may be more tolerated if your child is over-sensitive to textures such as metal
- Check that the cutlery is held with the thumb wrapped around underneath the spoon, knife and fork



Available from supplies such as www.dycem.com or www.nrs-uk.co.uk or www.homecraft-rolyan.com

Using non-slip mats under the plate (such as Dycem matting) helps to keep the plate still



Breaking the task down at mealtimes:

- Guide the arm by lightly supporting at the elbow
- Start to learn to cut using a knife and fork, by introducing soft foods, such as potatoes, and gradually work towards tougher food, such as meat
- Try to help your child by placing your hands over theirs and gently guiding and talking through each movement: Prod with the fork (keeping still) and saw with the knife
- Use diagonal cutting movements
- Keep the speed slow, so that they can learn the feel of the movements
- Cut most of the food and encourage your child to complete cutting the last 2 or 3 pieces (backward chaining)
- Once your child has begun to master cutting, use demonstration with your own set of cutlery, so that they can watch and copy your movements
- Gradually increase the opportunity for your child to cut more at each mealtime and reduce the amount of help you provide
- Practicing with Play-dough. Make this a fun-time activity, separate to meal times
- Use play-dough to mould a variety of shapes using your hands – relating them to real food: Sausages, carrots, chips, peas, fish fingers etc
- Help with food preparation tasks. Preparing a fruit salad or buttering and cutting sliced bread for the table or sandwiches.