



Scissor Skills

How to hold scissors:

The optimum position to hold scissors is with the thumb through the smaller hole and the middle (plus the ring and little fingers if big enough) through the bigger hole. The index finger should be positioned underneath the bigger hole for stabilisation and the loops should rest near the bent middle joint of the thumb/fingers that go through the loops. Encourage children to hold the paper in their non-dominant hand whilst operating the scissors with their dominant hand. Thumbs should always be 'on top' of the paper rather than underneath and through the top scissor hole rather than the lower hole.

Developing cutting skills:

Children first learn to snip, then to make a series of continuous snips in order to cut across a page. Straight lines are easiest to start with, then corners and finally curved lines. When cutting, the scissors should move away from the child's body, rather than across it.

Examples of snipping activities :

- Practice opening and shutting the scissors without paper.
- Make a sausage shape out of Playdough sausages and ask the child to cut it into small pieces.
- Single cut drinking straws into small pieces, which can then be used for threading and to make a necklace/bracelet.

Examples of cutting activities:

- Draw a line with a picture at either end, e.g. cat and mouse, dog and bone. Ask the child to cut along the line to reach the picture at the other end.
- Cut out pictures from magazine.
- Cut strips of paper into small pieces for papier-mâché.
- Fold a square or circle piece of paper several times. Ask the student to cut out shapes along the edges and open it out to make a snowflake to stick on the window.
- Fold a piece of paper in half long-ways and ask the child to cut along pre-drawn lines, starting at the folded crease towards the open end of the paper, making sure to stop before so that all strips remain connected. Unfold the paper and glue along the short edges to form a lantern. Cut a strip of paper and glue to the inside to make a handle.

Helpful tips:

- Reducing the scale of the drawing makes it harder.
- Different materials will offer different levels of resistance and can alter the level of skill needed and give students more sensory feedback. For example, cardboard, foil, sandpaper, textured card, magazines.