

Scissor Skills

When should I let my child use scissors?

- You can start introducing scissors to your child around the age of two.
- While it is good to start practicing using scissors at a young age, scissor skills are not fully developed until six years of age.

Developmental Progression of Scissor Skills

- Snips with scissors between 23 and 25 months old.
- Snips on a line with scissors between 28 and 35 months old.
- Cuts across paper following a straight line 6 inches long and then a curved line 6 inches long between 3 and 4 years old.
- Cuts out a circle with scissors between 3.5 years old and 4 years old.
- Cuts out a small square and triangle with scissors between 4 and 5 years old.
- Cuts out a picture following the general shape around 5 years old.
- Cuts out a complex picture following outlines between 5.5 and 6 years old.
- Cuts a cloth with scissors between 5.5 and 6 years old.

Why are scissor skills important?

- They are used for many school-related tasks. Children start using scissors in pre-school.
- Builds hand strength by opening and closing the blades.
- Develops hand-eye coordination by watching where to cut and deciding where to move the scissors next.
- Encourages using both sides of the body by holding scissors in one hand and paper in the other hand.
- Improves attention by concentrating during cutting tasks.

How to Hold Scissors

- Use the thumb up position to hold scissors. This means that the thumb should be facing up when cutting with scissors. Your helper hand that is holding the paper you are cutting should also be positioned on top.
- Remember, that the small hole on the scissors is for the thumb.
- There are right-handed and left-handed scissors, so be sure to buy the appropriate scissors once your child has established a hand dominance.

Correct scissors grip



Incorrect scissors grip



Supervision

- While children can start using scissors at a young age, it is important to remember that scissor activities should be specific, intentional, and supervised.
- Remember to use scissors that are safe for your child to use. There are many different types of scissors for children that are not as sharp as adult scissors.
- When working with scissors, have your child sit down at a table that is the appropriate height for them.
- Never let your child use scissors without close adult supervision.



Home Activities to Work on Scissor Skills

Close adult supervision is required during all of these activities to ensure the safety of all children. Remember to use scissors that are safe and appropriate for your child to use!

Cutting Paper

- Cutting paper is one of the most common ways to work on scissor skills.
- You can use any kind of paper you have in your house to work on these skills.
- Start with encouraging your child to snip the paper.
- As your child gets older and their scissor skills improve, you can advance to having them cut on lines and cut out different shapes.



Cutting Cardboard or Styrofoam

- Cardboard and Styrofoam are thicker materials, which makes them more difficult to cut. However, you can use both of these to practice scissor skills.
- Use cardboard boxes, takeout containers, Styrofoam meat trays, and Styrofoam plates for your child to cut.
- Similar to using paper, as your child gets older and their scissor skills improve, you can advance to having them cut on lines and cut out different shapes.



Cutting Foods

- Practice scissor skills by cutting different foods in the kitchen.
- Some examples of foods you can cut with scissors are:
 - Cooked pasta noodles
 - Cheese (sliced cheese or cheese strings)
 - Vegetables (green beans)
 - Fruits (bananas)
 - Twizzlers



Cutting Outdoors

- Get outside to make practicing scissor skills fun!
- Encourage your child to collect different items outdoors that they can cut such as leaves, flowers, grass, or small branches.



Cutting Drinking Straws

- Use drinking straws for your child to work on their scissor skills.
- Encourage your child to cut the straw into small pieces.



Cutting Playdough

- Cutting playdough is a great way to practice scissor skills for young children. If you don't have any playdough at home, try using these ingredients to make your own batch!
 - 1 cup of flour
 - ¼ cup of salt
 - 1 teaspoon of cream of tartar
 - ½ tablespoon of vegetable oil
 - ½ cup of boiling water
 - Food coloring (15-20 drops for darker colors)
- Directions to make playdough:
 - Whisk the flour, salt, and cream of tartar.
 - Make a small hole in the center and add the vegetable oil, boiling water, and food coloring.
 - Stir until the dough forms.
 - If the playdough feels runny or sticky, allow it to sit for a few minutes. If it still feels runny or sticky add a little more flour.
 - When dough is cool, use your hands to soften and form it.
 - Store the playdough in a Ziploc bag and place the bag in a sealed container.
- Encourage your child to cut the playdough by:
 - Rolling the playdough on the table to make a long snake and then cutting it into small pieces.
 - Flattening the playdough on the table to make a pancake and cutting it into sections.



Cutting at the Salon

- Make a salon in your home by using some of these materials to make clients who need a haircut:
 - Empty toilet paper or paper towel roll
 - Plastic spoon
 - Yarn, string, or paper
 - Pen, marker, or crayon
- You can use the empty toilet paper or paper towel roll or a plastic spoon for the client's head by drawing a face on it.
- Glue or tape yarn, string, or paper onto the client's head to make hair.
- Give your child scissors and encourage them to give the client a haircut.



Cupcake Liner Flowers Craft

- Use cupcake liners and scissors to create flowers and practice snipping with scissors.
- Since cupcake liners are thinner than regular paper, it can be more difficult for children to cut and may require increased concentration.
- Encourage your child to cut the cupcake liners to make flower petals.
- Then glue or tape the liner to a piece of paper and let your child draw the stem and leaves.



Lion Craft

- This lion craft is a great way for your child to work on scissor skills.
- Draw a circle on a piece of paper and have your child cut it out. If they are not able to cut out a circle yet, you can do this part for them.
- Draw another smaller circle in the center of the circle. This is for the lion's face. Use another piece of paper to glue in the center or have your child color the face on their own.
- Have your child snip around the edge of the paper to make the lion's mane. You can even draw hash marks for your child to practice cutting on the line.
- You can also try using a paper plate for this craft instead of using pieces of paper!



Caterpillar Craft

- Make a caterpillar out of paper to work on improving scissor skills.
- Have your child cut strips of paper. You can even draw lines for them to cut on.
- After you have cut out all the strips for the body, create the body by making a chain:
 - Create a circle with a strip of paper and then staple, glue, or tape it together.
 - Thread the next strip of paper through the circle you just created and then staple, glue, or tape it together.
 - Continue doing this until you have a chain and have used all your paper.
- Have your child draw a face on the front to make it a caterpillar.



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