



Scissor Skills for Children



Paediatric Occupational Therapy Department

📍 Gosford 📍 Long Jetty 📍 Wyong

📞 4328 7918



Health
Central Coast
Local Health District

Assisting your child to develop scissor skills will help to improve their fine motor skills, and will support their participation in craft and educational activities

Teaching your child to use scissors

Choose the right scissors

- Scissors vary in size and shape, so find a pair that fits your child's hands.
- Make sure your scissors can cut paper (some children's scissors are so blunt they only fold the paper not cut it).
- Left-handed scissors are best for left-handed children.
- There are types of scissors that will work well for children with weak grip.
- Spring back scissors can be used. These automatically spring open after being squeezed closed. These scissors are good for children who find it difficult to cut because of limited strength, or coordination.



Safety first

Teach your child a few house rules for scissor safety:

- What they are allowed to cut each time e.g. “Scissors are for cutting paper (or straws or play dough)”.
- No walking or running with scissors
- Pass the scissors to someone else by holding the scissors closed and giving the person the handles of the scissors (as pictured below).




Before teaching your child to use scissors, have them do some activities that will help strengthen their hands and improve their coordination.

You can build your child’s hand strength by getting them to do the following activities:

- use tongs or tweezers to move objects into a container; use cotton balls, pasta noodles, cereal pieces, or any small toys to place into a cup or into an empty egg carton
- tear pieces of paper (and make a collage)
- scrunch newspaper pages into a ball and throw them at a target
- punch holes into cards using a handheld hole punch
- squeeze water out of squirt toys in the bath or use a spray bottle to water the garden
- use an eye dropper for a watercolour painting
- play games with play dough that involve squeezing the dough
- squeeze sponges in the bath
- make a game using pegs to squeeze onto the side of a box or peg out pretend clothes

Holding the scissors

1. Position your child's hands so that their thumbs are always upward.
2. Place their thumb in the smaller loop. 
3. Place their pointer finger and, the middle finger if it fits, in the bottom scissor loop.
4. Some children are able to place their pointer finger outside the lower loop (this sometimes helps as a guiding finger).
5. Encourage your child to keep their thumbs upward for both hands (regardless of hand used).



Helping your child

When you are helping your child to cut, it is good to sit beside them and tell them what you are doing for each step. For example, you could say “look, I am using my thumb to open the scissors”. Or “look at the scissor blades opening and closing like a crocodile”.

If your child has some difficulty using the scissors, you may want to guide them using hand-over-hand guidance.



The cutting sequence

Development of scissor skills typically follows a sequence

Once your child can hold and use scissors, you can start the sequence.

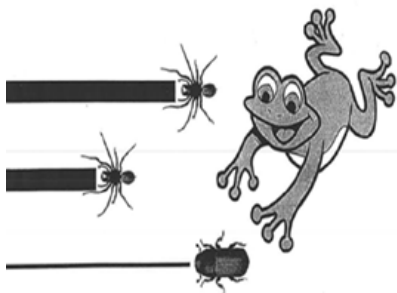
Start with snipping. You could cut a fringe around paper, or colourful straws that can be threaded into a necklace. Snipping play dough is also fun.

Once they can snip, offer pieces of thicker paper for cutting that require a few snips. Thicker paper makes it easier to cut than floppy paper.

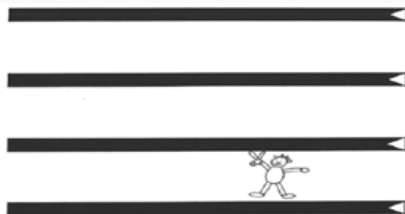
Make the paper wider so they are making a few forward cutting snips and until they are cutting across a page.



Practice cutting on lines;- draw straight and thick lines at first, then try a curved line across the page.



16. Beginner Work: Begin at the white triangle.



© 2000, Scholastic Teaching Resources, Inc. All rights reserved. This work is derived from Scholastic Teaching Resources, Inc. and is not to be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of Scholastic Teaching Resources, Inc.

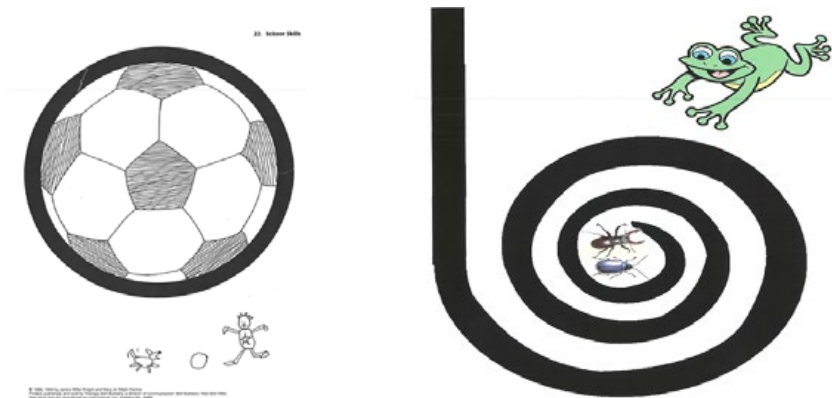


17. Beginner Work: Begin at the white triangle.

© 2000, Scholastic Teaching Resources, Inc. All rights reserved. This work is derived from Scholastic Teaching Resources, Inc. and is not to be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of Scholastic Teaching Resources, Inc.

Move to cutting circles:

- Help right-handed children to cut from the right-hand side of the shape, and
- Help left-handed children to cut from the left-hand side of the shape.
- You could also try some spiral cutting.



You can place stickers on corners of square shapes or curves of circles, to give your child the prompts needed to change hand positions while they are cutting.



Then try squares and triangles. You may have to use a thick pen to make the lines for a guide.

14. Scissor Skills
Begin at the white triangle.



© 2005, Linda Ward Beech, Scholastic Teaching Resources
This work is derived from Scholastic Teaching Resources. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of Scholastic Teaching Resources.

13. Scissor Skills
Begin at the white triangle.



© 2005, Linda Ward Beech, Scholastic Teaching Resources
This work is derived from Scholastic Teaching Resources. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of Scholastic Teaching Resources.

There are preschool craft activities you can find online that have simple shapes to cut. Some of the sites will offer free downloadable worksheets to assist with the cutting.

As your child's cutting gets better, you can try more complex shapes.