

Advice sheet

Using my Hands - Scissors

Using scissors successfully suggests the child has developed a wide range of skills. They may have the skill to use small scissors by 3-4 years. But the skills will not be fully developed until about 6 years.

Handling of scissors

- Finger Position (Some children may require physical assistance to position their hands appropriately on the scissors).
- Hand position (Always encourage a 'thumbs up' position when cutting i.e. thumbs uppermost).
- Supporting hand position (Always encourage a 'thumbs up' position with the supporting hand).

Snipping

- Try making "Hedgehogs". Practice snipping straws, which then can be pushed into play dough balls to make hedgehogs.
- Feeding the crocodiles. Use paper strips 1cm wide and snip pieces off the strip, then using clothes pegs as the 'crocodiles' feed the crocodiles.
- Make a lion. Print a face on to the middle of a circle or square of paper or thin card. Encourage the child to snip all around the edge making a mane. The end result could then be put on a straw.

Making a series of cuts

- Paper Strips. Use varying widths of paper strips to cut across increasing the width as the child's skill improves.



Developing accuracy

- 'Road cutting'. Introduce thick coloured lines to cut along, initially, use lines at least 2cm thick across a strip of paper 6cm wide. The child should be able to cut across the width of an A4 piece of paper prior to attempting this.
- Encourage the child to cut on the 'road', the width of the 'road', can then be reduced 1/2cm at a time, as the child's accuracy improves.
- When the child is able to cut along straight road introduce gentle curves, then zigzags and then simple shapes such as circles and squares.
- Finally increase the complexity of the shape.

Stopping

- Using lines drawn on paper, where the line does not reach the other side but stops. Encourage child to cut along the line only stopping when the line stops.
- Making a lantern. Use a basic paper lantern template and encourage the child to cut up the lines in the middle, stopping at the end of the lines. Use this principle in other craft activities.

Appropriate seating

- Always ensure your child is sitting on an appropriate height chair where their feet can be comfortably flat on the floor with their knees and hips at 90 degrees.

Activities to develop fine motor skills required for scissor skills.

Using the dominant hand

- Using tongs to pick up objects and transfer them e.g. kitchen tongs to pick up cotton balls.
- Games, which include tongs such as operation or wok 'n' roll.
- Use clothes pegs, which need to be squeezed to open.
- Use clothes pegs in games, timing in what time a child can put 10 pegs on the edge of a jar, or how long it takes the child to pick up 10 cotton wool balls, the child could then try to beat their score.



- Use food baster to blow along a Ping-Pong ball into a goal.

Using two hands where the hands are doing different actions.

- Threading – vary the size and shape of the beads and using threading cards.
- Stabilising Activities – rubbings, stencils, drawing.
- Clothes fastening.
- Using knife and fork.
- Pegging out toy clothes.
- Stirring mixture in a bowl.
- Peeling off stickers and sticking them on a sheet.



Main Points to remember

- Always encourage a 'thumbs up' position with both hands when cutting.
- Practice using tongs, pipettes and clothes pegs.
- Complete activities which require the arms to be elevated from the body e.g. stirring, drawing at an easel.
- Complete a variety of activities, which require use of two hands together each hand doing different activities.
- Use a graded approach giving time for the child to perfect the skill before moving on increasing the level of skill required.