

## USING SCISSORS

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### When should my child start using scissors?

Cutting with scissors is a complex two-handed skill that takes years to master. Starting around 3 years of age, children are usually interested in scissors. This is when they can start learning how to hold and cut with scissors, with adult supervision.

We know that skills improve

- When kids are having fun
- With practice and opportunities to explore

Scissors skills develop through stages starting with holding scissors and ending with the ability to accurately cut out intricate shapes.

### General suggestions

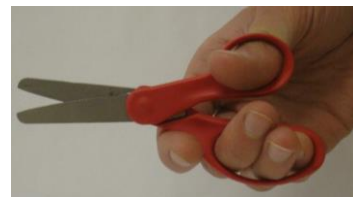
- Use good quality, child sized scissors. I.e., Fiskars®, Crayola®
- Scissors labelled as either left or right-handed are for beginners who are not sure which hand to use. Left-handed children should use true left-handed scissors.
- Make sure the child is in a stable position. Sitting in a chair with feet on the floor or sitting on the floor is best. Lying on their tummy can work too.
- When using scissors together, sit beside (or behind), not across from your child.
- Teach scissors safety.

### Getting Ready activities

- Play with turkey basters, clothespins, squeeze water bottles, spray bottles, squirt toys, wind-up toys or medicine droppers.
- Pick up objects with tongs, tweezers or “rookie sticks”.

### Holding Scissors

- Put the thumb in the smaller hole.
- Position the hand with the thumb facing up.



### Opening and Closing Scissors

- Practice snipping play dough snakes, craft foam or straws.
- Snip 2-3 cm wide strips of stiff paper into small pieces for a collage.
- Snip the edges of a recipe card or piece of junk mail.
- Have your child use scissors to open snack packages.

### Using the “Helper Hand”

- The thumb of the helper hand should also be facing up.
- Don't hold the paper for your child. Put your hand over theirs if they need help.
- See the Tip Sheet *Using Both Hands Together*.

### Cutting Along Lines

- Begin by cutting across a 5-10 cm wide piece of paper with two or more forward snips.
- Progress to cutting across larger pieces of paper, that need more snips.
- When starting to cut along lines, make them straight, wide and easy to see.
- Gradually make the lines more narrow and add curves or angles.

### Cutting around shapes

- Right-handed folks should cut counter-clockwise around a shape; left-handers should cut clockwise.
- Straight sided shapes like squares and triangles are easier than curved shapes. Cut one side. Turn the shape. Cut the next side.
- Close the blades while turning the paper to cut smoothly around a circle.

### Cutting out more difficult shapes

- Teach strategies for difficult shapes like stars, hand tracings or leaf shapes.
- Simplify. Draw a simple shape around tricky shape if it is too hard.
- Snip off extra paper.
- Cut a bit past a corner before turning the blades.
- Cut in from a different direction instead of following the line from beginning to end.

Different styles of scissors are available. Loop scissors are often helpful for beginners.



**These are general suggestions that may or may not be appropriate for your child's age and stage.**

If you have questions and are waiting for Occupational Therapy service, consider booking a Consultation Clinic appointment.