



## Scissor Skills

Using scissors correctly helps to develop hand muscles for other fine motor skills. Four years of age is the appropriate time for the majority of children to begin learning scissor skills, as their hands have grown large enough for small scissors. Encourage your child to use a “thumbs up” position, with the thumb of their scissor hand and their “helper hand” pointing towards the ceiling. Hold the scissors with the tips of the thumb and middle finger in the holes on the handles of the scissors. The index finger is on the outside of the handle to stabilize the scissors, and the ring and little fingers are curled into the palm. Scissors should have small handles to match your child’s finger size. Using scissors that are the wrong size, or held incorrectly, results in your child using different muscles to complete the cutting actions, which decreases precision.

### **Cutting Progression:**

- **Open and Close:** Have your child practice opening and closing the scissors. Pair the words open and close with the movements so that they get a better idea of what they need to do with the scissors.
- **Snipping Manipulatives:** Hold a manipulative in front of them and help them make cuts on this (e.g. a straw, piece of play dough, fruit roll up, licorice). Encourage your child to cut with thumb pointing up! As they master this skill, begin to have your child hold the manipulative in one hand and snip with the other.
- **Snipping Paper:** Give your child small pieces (i.e. 1”x 4”) of thick paper, such as construction paper, Bristol board, card foam or card stock. Have your child cut the paper into strips from bottom to top. Gradually increase the size of the paper. Once they are able to cut 4” by 4”, add a thick line to the paper and have your child cut along the line.

Tip: If your child is cutting top to bottom, with thumb down, tape a paper to the wall at shoulder height so that your child can only cut from the bottom to top.

- **Cutting Lines:** Have your child cut along straight lines. Gradually progress to lines that have a change in direction (e.g. zig zags).
- **Cutting Shapes:** Have your child begin to cut shapes, such as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, hearts, etc. Use regular paper. Have your child pick up the paper with two hands and practice turning the paper (clockwise for right-handed cutters and counter clockwise for left-handed). Encourage your child to reposition the paper with their helping hand as they cut.

### **Fun Cutting Activities:**

- Cutting rows of stickers in half or cutting in between rows of stickers
- Cutting strips of paper to make paper chains
- Cutting card foam to make various shapes
- Cutting out coupons
- Making collages
- Making paper snowflakes