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Scissor Skills

This programme has been developed to provide children with a graded approach to learn scissor skills. Also included is a range of hints and tips to assist with cutting.

Pre Scissor Skills

Scissor skills

Scissor Skills Progress

Scissor Skills Sheet



PRE – SCISSOR SKILLS

Being able to cut with scissors involves the skill of hand separation. This means using the thumb, index and middle fingers separately from the rest of the hands. It is a similar skill needed for writing. These activities below focus on the child being able to open and close the hand using the first three fingers.

Helpful strategies

- ☺ Progress from larger movements to smaller movements when cutting.
- ☺ Initially cutting in an unskilled manner with more tearing than cutting.
- ☺ Use salad and kitchen tongs to pick up objects, move them from one place to another, and release them. This can be done as a relay race or incorporated into a game. Salad servers with scissors-like loops combine open and close motions with grasp of the loops for more advanced skill development.

Bilateral activities

- ☺ Hands doing the same action: Lego, rolling pin, large ball games, pop beads, interlocking games.
- ☺ Hands doing the same but opposite action: squeezing out a cloth, tearing paper, wheelbarrow games, hand over hand pulling along a rope.
- ☺ Stabilisation with grasp: - one hand stabilises other supports/stabilises activity: opening jar, stabilise paper and draw, pouring, hold bowl and stir, threading, knife and fork, templates / stencils, wind-up toys, lacing / threading.
- ☺ Punch holes with hand held paper punch. Holes can be pasted on paper and made into ladybirds. Alternatively get them to punch holes around the outside of a sheet of paper and then thread string through the holes.
- ☺ Squirt water with a turkey baster or bulb syringe from one bucket to another, in the bathtub, to mix different colours of water or to aim at targets.

Activities

- ☺ Make scissors talking puppets; cut nothing but open the blade slow/fast, wide/slight.
- ☺ Stapling with hand-held stapler.
- ☺ Peg games – hanging out the washing or using pegs to pick up cotton wool balls to make a collage
- ☺ Games like “operation” and “bed bugs” using tongs or tweezers
- ☺ Squirt guns, eye droppers or water pistols – used with coloured water to make a picture
- ☺ Spinning tops



SCISSOR SKILLS

Cutting skills take time for children to develop. Being able to use scissors to cut well is important for many preschool and school activities including art and craft. Children may have the skills to use small scissors by three to four years of age, but scissor skills are not fully developed until 6 years of age.

When is my child ready to use Scissors?

To use scissors children need:

- ☺ Good sitting balance so they can use their arms and hands freely.
- ☺ Strong wrist and hand muscles to open and close the scissors.
- ☺ Development of a preferred and an assistant hand. Cutting involves each hand doing different tasks that require practice. The preferred hand uses the scissors and the other hand turns the paper.
- ☺ Good coordination of their eyes and hands for cutting around shapes.
- ☺ An ability to use the thumb, index and middle fingers whilst the other fingers remain fairly still.
- ☺ A pair of suitable scissors and an interest in using them.

Choosing Scissors for your child

- ☺ Scissors with tiny oval handles are easiest for children to use. Short blades will give the cutter

How to hold scissors

Everyone has their own style of holding scissors. However, if you get a chance to teach your child then this is a good way of holding them:

- ☺ Putting the index finger in front helps to give good scissor control. This grip also strengthens the same muscles that children need for drawing and writing.

Materials to cut

Start with materials that do not require much holding and positioning. Also, it is best to start with things that require only one snip, not a couple of cuts. This list goes from easiest to hardest:

- ☺ Straws (these can be threaded to make a necklace).
- ☺ Strips of light cardboard (about 2cm wide).
- ☺ Firm paper (fringe the edge by snipping).
- ☺ Firm paper with a thick straight line to cut along (start with a 10cm strip).
- ☺ As above with thinner lines or wider paper

the most success. The scissors also need to be sharp enough to cut the material on hand or it will be a frustrating experience. Children will need supervision for sharp scissors. Make sure that scissors have rounded rather than pointy ends for safety.

Scissors for Left Handers

- ☺ Always provide left handed scissors for left handed children.
- ☺ Right handed scissors are designed so that the natural bending of the fingers and thumb pull the blades together. In the left hand the same movement causes the blades to move apart so the paper bends or the cut is not as clean. The wrong scissors also make it difficult to see the line that is being cut because it is blocked from view. Scissors that can be used with either hand also block seeing the line and have a tendency for the blades to loosen.

strips.

- ☺ Firm paper with curvy lines.
- ☺ Paper with simple shapes.
- ☺ Lighter paper or more complex shapes (these need a lot of holding and positioning).

Extra Tips

- ☺ If you don't want your child to use sharp scissors, they could practice cutting Play-Doh sausages with plastic scissors.
- ☺ Start with a collection of old flyers, catalogues and magazines for when your child gets really involved in cutting.
- ☺ Encourage them to paste their pictures onto larger sheets of paper.
- ☺ Develop a system for cleaning up ie rules about what and where they can cut and who is going to pick up the scraps.
- ☺ Keep your good sewing scissors out of reach!

Where can you get scissors?

A range of scissors is available from www.homecraft-rolyan.com
Tel: 08702 423305.

CHILDRENS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SCISSOR SKILLS PROGRESS

YOU CAN USE THIS CHECKLIST MONIOTR YOUR CHILDS PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING SCISSOR SKILLS

Scissor Skills	✓	Comments
Tears paper during play activities		
Shows an interest in and understands the use of scissors		
Maintains a correct grip when positioned by the adult		
Holds scissors appropriately without assistance		
Opens and closes the scissors		
Opens and closes the scissors using a controlled action		
Holds paper and makes random cuts		
Makes consecutive cuts with a forward motion		
Cuts in a straight line avoiding unilateral movement (twisting scissors)		
Holds paper appropriately with the other hand and rotates the paper when cutting		
Cuts out shapes involving one change of direction		
Cuts out simple shapes, more than one change in direction		
Able to cut along curved lines		
Able to cut out circles		
Able to cut more complicated shapes with straight and curved lines		

