



Pathways to Success

Helpful Strategies for Parents and Caregivers of Young Children

Activities to Develop Scissor Skills

Learning to use scissors takes practice. When holding scissors, the child should:

- Hold them in their preferred hand
- Have their thumb facing the ceiling (thumbs-up)
- Have their thumb in smaller top loop and second and middle fingers through larger bottom loop
- Have the helper hand use a thumb-up grasp to hold the item to be cut

Activities to Develop Bilateral Coordination (using both the right and left sides of the body together in play and movement):

- Stability and strengthening activities such as animal walks, yoga
- Large toys and stacking blocks or cups that require two hands to hold them
- Practice “crossing the midline”
- Clapping games (pat-a-cake)
- Toys that you push together and pull apart with two hands (blocks, pop beads, magnetic toys)
- Beading, lacing, stirring, removing lids

Activities to Develop Opening and Closing the Hand

- Use salad servers, food tongs or large tweezers to pick up objects like small toys, marshmallows, Cheerios, cotton balls or paper balls
- Practice squeezing movements using a variety of toys like squirt guns, eyedroppers, hole punches, clothes pins or sponges
- Use a turkey baster in the bathtub or water table to squirt soap bubbles off hands or to fill a pail with water

(see over)



Activities to Practice Scissor Operation

- Invent games to encourage snipping such as crocodiles eating grass, or sharks swimming on a wave
- Practice snipping motions on a variety of materials like playdough, styrofoam, cardboard, yarn, different textures of paper, tinfoil or straws

Activities to Practice Cutting with Controlled Direction

- Introduce a 3 to 4 inch line when the child is able to cut across a piece of paper
- Make a “guide” for the scissors to follow. For example, two lines of glue, popsicle sticks, yarn, sandpaper in two lines parallel to each other. Have the child cut between the two lines. Different textures and colors will serve as a reminder when they are going off of the line.
- Once the child understands cutting with direction, have the child try cutting along thick lines drawn on paper with felt pen. As improvement is shown, the lines can be made thinner. Cutting can then be progressed as follows:
 - Cutting a square
 - Cutting out slightly curved lines
 - Cutting out a circle
 - Cutting out detailed shapes