

Introducing scissor skills

Using scissors requires strength, finger control and the ability to separate the two sides of the hand. This means you need to stabilise with the outer side and move the thumb, index and middle fingers. Not to mention using the "helping" hand to hold and manipulate the paper. It is a complex skill which takes time to develop.

Introducing your child to cutting with scissors at an early age can be done through play with many fun and engaging ways to develop this skill.

Keep an eye on your child when they are playing with scissors and supervise from a safety perspective. You may wish to begin with plastic scissors designed for cutting playdough.

There are many junior style scissors, some which have a spring to help them open up again in readiness for the next snip. These can be an ideal first option for scissors.

Even before using scissors, help your child to strengthen their hands and fingers with other play opportunities which mimic the movements which will be required when cutting

- Squeeze squirt toys or spray bottles
- Use tongs or kid's tweezers to collect and place items
- Use a small single hole hole-puncher to chomp away at paper or light cardboard
- Squeeze and place clothes pegs



Ways to use first scissors

Show your child how to hold the scissors - with thumb on top

Use left handed scissors if your child is left handed

You may want to begin by supporting the item they are cutting for them, so they can concentrate on the open and close of the scissors.

Thicker paper, such as a light cardboard or a paper plate is easier to control to begin with.

Snipping is the first step so here are some snipping ideas

- Roll and snip playdough
- Use playdough tools which squeeze out long thin strands and snip away like cutting hair
- Snip straws to use later for threading
- Snip around a paper plate to make a lion's mane or a prickly porcupine
- Snip across narrow rectangles of paper and use to create a collage picture
- If you are encouraging snipping on a line - make sure that the marker is nice and thick to allow for success. You can use paper sticky tape to make a thick line to follow

