



Techniques For Teaching Your Child How To Cut With Scissors

- Check to see if your child can move their fingers individually. If not, Squizzers or loop scissors may be their first pair of scissors.
- Choose the correct size of scissors for your child. Children with small hands may need to use small scissors like Benbow scissors* with blue for righties and yellow for lefties.
- Fiskar scissors are ideal as they can be used by either righties or lefties. They are ideal for cutting through a wide variety of textures (ex: paper, craft materials). They come with pointed and blunted tips.
- Teach ‘thumbs up’ approach and proper placement of fingers.
- Righties should cut to the right of the design, while lefties should cut to the left.
- Stress that cutting is a bimanual task; the worker and helper hand have special jobs.
- Avoid ‘hooking’ of the dominant/worker hand by providing verbal cueing and more vertical orientation of the paper.
- Avoid ‘hooking’ of assistive/helper hand by encouraging/teaching how to move paper more effectively while cutting.
- Watch for signs of decreased postural control; “chicken wings” (raising the elbows up in the air), pushing of the upper body into the back of the chair, paper placed flat on the desk or a palm down hand position.
- Teach your child to cut away from the midline of their body.
- Teach your child to cut past the corner.
- If needed: outline the cutting line with marker, delineate stop (red) and go (green) points, or provide raised guidelines using waxy Stikki Wikkis.
- For younger children, start with templates and perforated lines.
- Embroidery scissors are great for getting into tight corners
- Paper with a greater thickness (ex: an index card or good quality construction paper) are easier to manage and cut through than thin paper (ex: computer paper, thin construction paper).
- Verbal reinforcement is sometimes helpful for children with motor planning difficulty. For example say, “Open, push, closed”.
- Encourage children to slow down and watch what they are cutting> Say, “Eyes help hands”.
- Cutting progression for beginners: Start with cutting on wide lines (1/2 -1 –inch) and gradually decrease width. Larger shapes are easier to cut than smaller shapes (3-inch then, 2-inch, etc.). Angular shapes (squares, triangle, diamonds) are easier to cut than curved shapes (circles, ovals).
- Resistive non-paper materials such as plastic straws and Theraputty can help provide needed proprioception stimuli and/or help increase finger strength.

* www.OTIdeas.com or www.PFOT.com

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Adapted from M. Hansen, M. Loreng