



Ideas for developing early scissor skills



The normal development of cutting often follows a sequence:

- Tearing
- Tearing around Shapes
- Snipping using two hands on scissors
- Snipping with one hand
- Cutting
- Cutting along a thick line
- Accurately cutting along a line
- Changing direction when cutting along a line

When working on cutting with a child, it is important to keep this sequence in mind. Start from the child's present level and work from there.

Ideas for each level:

1. **Tearing coloured paper:** Using different thicknesses to also work on strength. Encourage using both hands together. Scrunch torn pieces into balls to make a collage or to try and throw them into a bucket.
2. **Tearing around shapes:**
 - ✓ Tear out pictures in a magazine
 - ✓ Try tearing along a line
 - ✓ Try tearing along the edge of a piece of paper to see how long you can make the piece of paper (like a snake)
 - ✓ Tear strips of paper to make grass in a picture
 - ✓ Start with large pieces of paper and work towards smaller pieces
3. **Snipping:**
 - ✓ Initially hold the item to be cut so that your child can focus on snipping
 - ✓ Encourage your child to hold the item to be snipped in non-dominant hand and scissors in dominant. They may initially need some help to hold the item to be snipped.
 - ✓ Start with sturdy items as it is easier to control, for example strips of card, straws, feathers which require only one snip to cut it in half.

- ✓ Roll play dough into a sausage and cut into small pieces

Encourage your child to grasp the scissors correctly as follows:

- ◆ The thumb should be in the uppermost loop with the middle finger in the lower loop;
- ◆ The index finger should support the lower loop;
- ◆ The loops should rest near the bent middle joints of the fingers.

Some children may hold the scissors in a different ways. If a child is able to use scissors effectively with an alternative grip it may not be beneficial to encourage change. However, if the child has difficulty following lines and manipulating the scissors, they may benefit from adopting the more appropriate grip.

If your child is still finding it difficult to snip after lots of practice they may benefit from starting off with alternative scissors such as the spring loaded or long looped scissors. www.peta-uk.com has a wide range of scissors for purchase.

4. **Cutting:** Cut up old magazines, cards, wallpaper scraps. Using a variety of sizes thicknesses and textures.
5. **Cutting along a thick line:** cut along a line of holes – have the child cut from one hole to the next, move on from straight lines, to squiggly lines and later around shape and tracks
6. **Accurately cut along a thinner line:** Cutting out pictures and shapes

Please note: Your child should be supervised at all times when using scissors.