

# Activities to Encourage Scissor Skills



- Incorporate other activities that require similar hand coordination. For example: picking up objects with kitchen tongs; using spray bottles, eye droppers, sponges and plastic water basters in water play; using a spray bottle to clean tables after snack, to water plants, or to spray colored water in the snow; using a hole punch in art activities; using a garlic press with play dough and squeezing play dough with hands.
- The easiest paper to cut is thicker, stiffer paper such as construction paper and old envelopes, as they are easy to hold and remain firm between the scissor blades without bending or tearing. Play dough or clay also works well.
- Provide verbal reminders to “keep your thumb up”. Singing little rhythmic songs such as “open, shut, open, shut...that’s the way the scissors cut.” may help a child to coordinate the ‘opening’ and ‘closing’ of his hand while they cut. It is sometimes helpful to provide a visual cue as well, by placing a small mark or sticker on the thumb nail, that the child always has to be able to see!
- To help with coordination of both hands you can say: “cut, cut, cut...move your thumb” so the hand that holds the paper moves according to the snipping.
- Draw a shape or put a sticker on a piece of construction paper. Encourage the child to cut to the shape or sticker – then draw a line to the sticker, to increase the challenge.
- With success, gradually increase the challenge by increasing the length of the line and decreasing the width.
- Holding the paper for the child allows them to concentrate on one task until they are able to manage both.
- Encourage rotation of paper with the non-dominant hand while cutting, instead of turning their body or scissor hand. Children who are left-hand dominant will cut a circle in a clockwise manner whereas right-handed children will cut in a counter-clockwise way. (It is important that left-handed children use scissors designed specifically for them).
- Adapted scissors, such as Spring-loop scissors (require simple squeezing action; open automatically) can be useful to children who find cutting especially challenging.