

There are lots of skills a child needs to be able to use scissors well. These are skills they learn and develop through play as they grow. The child needs to be able to:

- Have balance skills so they can sit well on a chair (in front of a table is best). The table chair should be at the right height for them so that they are able to have both feet firmly on the ground.
- Be able to use what is called a pincer grip, that is grip things between fingers and thumb so that they can control the scissors.
- Use both hands together so that they can guide the paper to cut out accurately.

There are lots of things a child can do in play before they start to use scissors. Here are some ideas.

Games to play without using scissors:

- Tearing paper to make collages.
- Squeezing empty bottles in water to make bubbles.
- Squeezing empty bottles at table tennis balls (blow football)
- Using a hole punch to make patterns.
- Glove puppets or finger puppets.
- Play dough or plasticine.
- Water squirters or water pistols.
- Squeaky toys.
- Clothes pegs.
- Using cooking tongs or plastic tweezers to pick things up.

Things to do using scissors to develop skills:

- Start by cutting straight lines, then curves and circles before shapes with sharp corners
- Punch holes in paper and cut from hole to hole.
- Cut between two pieces of card glued onto the paper as a guide. Start with a wide gap and get smaller and smaller.
- Cut between two lines, again start with them wide apart and then closer together.
- Cut along a thick line, then make it thinner.
- Encourage the child to trim edges away from the paper before cutting out a difficult shape.
- Use scissors to cut a fringe around a piece of paper to make a place mat the child can colour in and use.
- Allow the child to cut up lots of different textures, thick card, thin paper, material stuck on paper, fine sand paper etc.