

Resources for Families:

Supporting Your Child with Cutting

Learning to cut with scissors comes after children have developed other fine motor skills. Children have to work on hand coordination in order to do the “open and close” hand motions necessary for cutting with scissors.

Activities to prepare your child for cutting with scissors:

- Squeeze water from a washcloth into the bathtub or sink — this strengthens the small muscles in the hand
- Crumple paper into balls – this strengthens small muscles in the hands
- Tear paper into strips or small pieces – this allows children to use their hands in a coordinated way
- Use a medicine dropper to drop water from one container into another – this requires coordination and motor control



Note: A good sign that children are ready to start using scissors is when they show an interest.

Tips for introducing scissors to your child:

- Before beginning, talk with your child about using scissors
 - Talk about scissor safety and not walking or running with scissors.
 - Discuss what is okay to cut and what is not okay to cut (like clothing and hair).
- Choose the right scissors:
 - Use small blunt tip scissors that are not dull
 - Use left handed scissors for a left-handed child
- Show your child how to use scissors:
 - Let your child watch you cut paper to see how it is done
 - Sit next to your child and cut something together
- Helping your child practice cutting
 - Hold the edges of the paper while your child cuts across
 - Let your child start by cutting small snips of paper
 - Let your child cut different types of paper (cardstock, newspaper, tissue, wrapping paper)
 - Let your child flatten play dough and cut it.



Note: Remember that it may take time for your child to be able to cut out shapes or curved lines. Allow your child many opportunities to try cutting with scissors, and help, if needed.