

Pre-Scissor Activities

Using scissors is a tricky skill which takes time and plenty of practise to develop. Children often start using scissors when they're in their nursery year in school, but the activities are much less formal and typically focus on developing the early skills. There are a number of different activities you can try at home which will help your child develop the hand skills needed to use a pair of scissors, especially if they are struggling getting to grips with this skill.

Playdough

- Roll into small balls between thumb and forefinger to make 'eggs'. Pinch up the edges of a flattened piece to make a birds nest for the eggs.
- Pinch small balls of playdough between thumb and forefinger, can they be flattened into a pancake?
- Make a 'dinner' for a dolls house, can you use your thumb and forefinger to roll some sausages or peas?

Clothes pegs

- Make a face on a piece of card, use the clothes pegs to give the face some spikey hair. What colour will it be?
- Make coloured spots with card, sort the pegs by clipping the matching peg to the card.
- Draw a crocodile's mouth on the side of the peg, what can the crocodile eat with the peg?

Squirty bottles

- Chalk pictures on the pavement or wall, erase them by squirting water from a spray bottle.
- Water the plants, or wash the windows using a spray bottle.
- Make a target over the sink, see if you can hit the target with the spray bottle.

Other ideas

- Tear up paper into small strips, try and make a picture with it.
- Use a turkey baster to have a race with feathers, who can blow it across the table first?
- Use tweezers or tongs to try and pick up objects such as cotton balls or pompoms, try and drop them into a container.
- Use a hole punch to make holes in some card, try and thread a lace through them.

Ready to give scissors a try?

- Child sized scissors will be easier to use – pick up a good pair from the stationary section in the supermarket for approx. £3 - £5. Look out for Maped Koopy scissors - they can be switched to spring-loaded which makes cutting easier.
- Left handers will need left handed scissors – the cutting blade is on the other side!
- Sit down to use scissors - ensure the chair and table are at a good height, elbows need to rest comfortably and feet well supported (try a box or a step). Children can use their hands much more effectively when they are in this good supportive position.
- Have the 'Rules of Cutting' sheet handy as a reminder
- Practise snipping playdough first





Grading Cutting Activities

1. Practise snipping

- Snip across straws – they can be used later for threading
- Make slime and pour out on a rack over a table. Snip the slime ribbons as they fall.
- Grow a grass head and practise snipping its hair as it grows.
- Make a fringe by snipping the edges of a sheet of paper
- Snip thin strips of paper (no wider than 1 inch)
- Punch holes or place stickers along the edge of a sheet of paper and snip up to the hole or sticker.



2. Cutting along a straight line

- Practise cutting along thick lines first, then progress to thinner lines.
- Cut in between a path made of wikkisticks
- Place stickers along the line as a visual guide
- Make paper chains – cut strips of card then glue the strips into circles, interlocking them to make a chain.
- Paper lantern – Fold a piece of paper in half lengthways; make cuts an inch apart starting at the folded edge and stopping an inch before you reach the end. Once all lines have been cut, open out and stick the two short ends together to make a lantern. Cut additional strips from another piece of paper for a handle and streamers.



3. Cut around angles (e.g. square or triangle)

- Cut in between a path made by puffy paint.
- Make some playing cards to play matching pairs. Draw a box around each picture to cut out along the lines.
- Make shape pictures – cut out individual (angled) shapes – try and make a house, a rocket or a Christmas tree.
- Make a shopping list - draw a box around pictures from magazines and catalogues – cut around them and stick them onto your list.
- Draw continuous concentric squares, cutting along the lines to make a decoration that can be hung up.

4. Cut around curves and circles

- Use finger paints to follow the path of the curve and then cut along this path once the paint has dried.
- Glue string to make a curved path and cut in between.
- Draw continuous concentric circles, cutting along the line to make a snake
- Make curve/circle shape pictures – can you make a flower?
- Draw pizza slices and cut out tomatoes and pepperoni to go on top.