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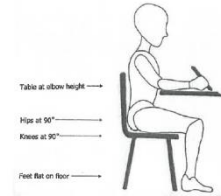
**Therapi Galwedigaethol Plant**  
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## Learning to Use Scissors

Before children can successfully use scissors, there are several skills they need to successfully develop. These include:

- Good sitting balance
- Hand dominance
- The ability to use both hands at the same time
- The ability to isolate the movements of their thumb, index and middle fingers
- Having enough muscle strength in the hand to be able to control the scissors



### Pre-Scissor Activities

There are many different games and activities that help a child to develop the skills needed to use scissors.

#### Hand Dominance

This is the development of a preferred hand, generally this will happen naturally but some children will continue to switch between hands. Developing a dominant hand is important for developing precision skills such as using scissors. This does not mean that the other hand does not do anything, as the non-dominant hand will assist activities, for example holding the paper. You can check this by placing an object towards the mid-line (middle) and observe which hand the child picks it up with, you can also observe which hand the child uses to initiate every day activities such as brushing their teeth, opening a door or pointing to objects. Often a child will begin fine motor tasks with their dominant hand and switch to non-dominant when their hand tires, try to discourage this and instead encourage them to rest their dominant hand before returning to the task.

#### Activities to encourage use of both hands

- Using pop beads or any other interlocking toys e.g. Lego
- Using a rolling pin for rolling out play dough, use both hands to knead the dough and cutters to make shapes
- Ripping paper using two hands
- Drawing around stencils encouraging stabilisation with the non-dominant hand
- Picking up objects with both hands and placing them in a box simultaneously.
  - Using musical instruments e.g. drums or tambourines with two hands together.
  - Using threading boards
  - Pouring water from one container to another
  - Ball games involving throwing, rolling or catching.
  - Clapping hands together to burst bubbles.



- Any clapping activities or games e.g. clapping hands together, on knees, thighs etc. or against someone else's hands.

### **Activities to encourage finger isolation**

- Posting pennies in piggy bank
- Wind-up toys
- Threading beads
- Finger Puppets
- Stickers
- Action songs – that require opening and closing of hand or isolating movements e.g. twinkle, twinkle, five little ducks, incy wincy spider



### **Activities to Encourage Hand Strength**

- Use tweezers, tongs or chopsticks to pick up objects (e.g. pom poms). Start with larger objects and progress to smaller.
- Practice squeezing – using soft balls, water pistols or water spray bottles
- Playdough – squeeze, pull and pinch playdough.
- Make sock puppets – opening and closing the mouth to talk



## **Holding Scissors**

It is important that children are taught how to hold scissors and how to use them safely.



Children should hold scissors in their dominant hand with thumb and middle finger inserted into the scissor loops, with the index finger stabilizing the lower loop as shown in the picture.

Younger children with smaller hands may find it easier to hold the scissors with index and middle finger inside the loop.



The child should be encouraged to keep thumbs up when cutting.

Children should be taught when walking with scissors they should grip the scissors in the palm of their hand as shown.

## **Left handers**

It is important that left handed children are given left handed scissors. The design of scissors prevents the effective use of right handed scissor in the left hand and can lead to ineffective cutting and frustration for the child.

Left handed children should be encouraged to hold the scissors in the same way as above with index finger supporting outside of loops.



## Learning to Cut

### Step 1

Once the child has learnt to hold the scissors, they will practice opening and closing the scissors. The child should first practice cutting in random snips on the edge of the paper. The child may find it easier to begin with heavier weight paper. The child should be encouraged to use their other hand to hold the paper.



- Practice cutting up thin pieces of playdough
- Cut up straws
- Cut the edge of paper plate to make a lion mask

### Step 2



Once the child has mastered this skill they should be encouraged to cut across the paper from one side to the other. Start by cutting straight lines across the page, if using lines to cut on these should initially be a thick, short line (ie 15cm thick) and gradually decreasing the width.

- Cut out strips of coloured paper to make paper chains
- Cut out strips of paper to complete paper weaving
- Cut out different craft materials to stick onto paper

### Step 3

Once this skill is mastered, the child can practice changing direction with the scissors, this can be done by practicing with zig zag lines, again starting with thicker lines and progressing to thinner and simple shapes.



- Practice zig zag lines on different types of paper
- Cut out different shapes e.g. squares, triangles and make a house
- Cut out your own bookmark and decorate it.



### Step 4

Once this skill has been mastered, the child can progress to wavy lines and circles.

- Practice wavy lines on different types of paper
- Practice cutting different sized circles and make faces with them
- Make a snake mobile
- Cut out different coloured circles and put together to create a caterpillar



### Step 5

The child should then progress to practicing cutting shapes and pictures.

- Practice cutting out pictures in magazines
- Cut out pictures on greetings cards

The child should be given lots of opportunity to practice each of these activities to ensure they are confident before moving on.

## Alternative Scissors

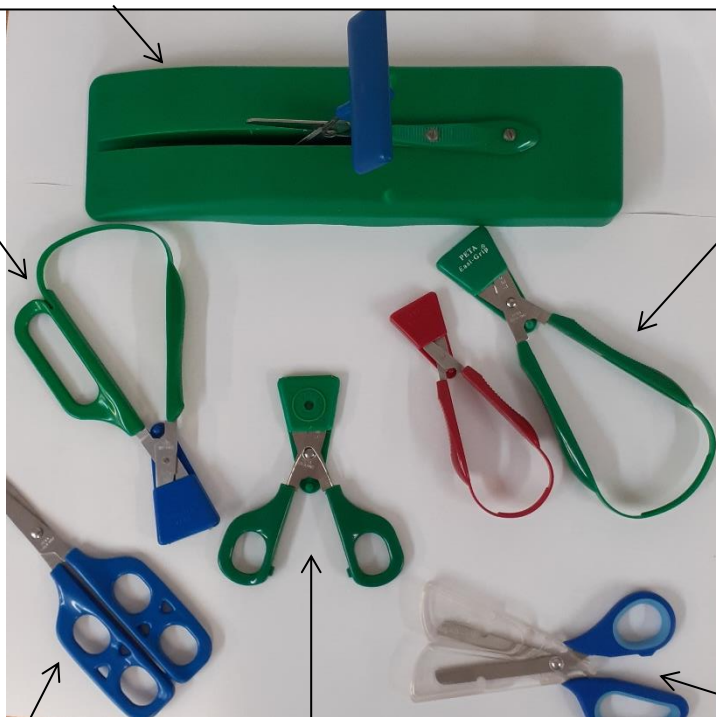
There are many different types of scissors available that can assist children who may have difficulty using regular scissors. It is important to remember that each of these scissors also come in left handed or right handed, it is important that the child uses the correct ones.

### Mounted Table Top Scissors

These scissors would be recommended for use with children who have poor hand strength, poor fine motor skills, tremor or for use one handed.

### Long Loop Scissors

These scissors would be recommended for children who had poor motor control and hand strength, they can also be used for children who have a tremor.



### Easy Grip Scissors

These come in both short and long lengths. They are recommended for children that have weak grip or poor hand control and enable all fingers to be used when cutting.

### Dual Control Training Scissors

These scissors can be used to help teach a child how to use scissors and to help build confidence. Recommended for use with children who have reduced hand strength, visual perception difficulties or a tremor.

### Spring loaded scissors

These are recommended for children with limited hand strength, who need support with the opening of the scissors.

### Safety Scissors

These have a protective plastic around the blade, paper needs to be inserted inside the plastic casing to cut.