

Occupational Therapy Tip Sheet

PRE-CUTTING SKILLS

Learning to use scissors



What are pre-cutting skills?

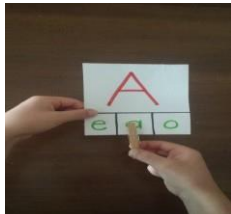
- Pre-cutting skills include the ability to use a grasp-release motion, to cut on a line and to turn the paper while cutting.

Why are pre-cutting skills important?

- It will help children to safely use scissors and accurately cut along a line.
- Scissors are used for many different tasks and subjects.

Practice the following activities to help develop pre-cutting skills:

- Use spray bottles to wash tables or windows, water plants or bath time fun (squeezing and releasing the trigger helps practice a repetitive grasp-release motion with the whole hand).
- Practice opening and closing clothespins, tongs or tweezers (the squeeze and release motion is needed for scissor use).
- Use clothespins to pick up bits of crumpled paper, pom poms or beads and transfer them into a container or hang small items on a line.
- Use clothespin on round game boards, rotating the board to place the clips (turning the game board with the helper hand, develops paper turning skills).
- Play card games to practice shifting and rotating the cards (UNO and matching are good choices for this practice).



General tips for scissor use:

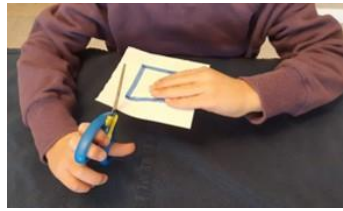
- Use small sized, blunt-nosed scissors.
- Left-handed children use left-handed scissors or scissors designed for use with either hand.
- Grasp scissors with thumb in the smaller hole and other fingers through the larger hole. If more comfortable, the index finger can rest on the outside the scissors.
- If a child has difficulty opening the scissors, it can be helpful to use a special pair of scissors that automatically opens after they have closed them; these are called loop, spring or quick release scissors.



- Correct positioning is important; encourage elbows “glued” to their sides and the scissors pointed away from their body.



(correct position)



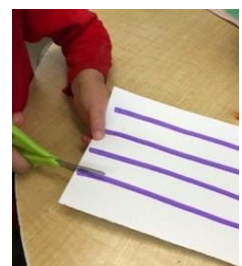
(incorrect position)

DOs and DON'Ts of using scissors:



- **DO** hold the paper off the table with the helper hand; thumbs on top and fingers underneath for both hands.
- **DON'T** hold the paper down on the table. Moving away from the table may be helpful.



DO



DON'T

- **DO** cut around shapes in the correct direction. Right-handers should start with their scissors to the right side of the shape; counter-clockwise direction  . Left-handers should start with their scissors to the left side of the shape; clockwise direction  .



DO



DON'T

- **DO** start cutting lines farthest from the helper hand that is holding the paper.



DO



DON'T