

# FINE MOTOR SKILLS

**Strategy:** Scissor Skills

**Audience:** Kindergarten to Grade 4

## What:

- Using scissors to cut is a complex fine motor skill requiring good motor control, strength, and eye-hand coordination
- Developmental progression:
  - snipping actions: single cuts at the edge of the paper
  - consecutive cutting actions: cutting across a wide piece of paper
  - consecutive cutting along a 6-inch bold line
  - cutting a variety of lines (curved, wavy, etc.) and simple shapes (square, rectangle, etc.) with accuracy
  - cutting more complex shapes and designs accurately
- Scissor readiness: Does the child show interest in scissors? Do they have hand strength? Can they open and close their hands? Can they do activities that involve both hands independently?

## How:

- Pre-cutting activities: Use scissor-like tools to reinforce the opening and closing motions (e.g., tongs to pick up small items, hole punch, squirt toys, spray bottles, etc.)
- Position: Teach the child the “thumbs up, scissors forward” starting position. Hold the scissors with the thumb and index or middle finger inserted in the scissor loops. Keep the elbows bent at the side of the body. Reinforce that the job of the non-dominant hand (“helper hand”) is to hold the paper. Allow child to rest forearm on table or in lap to ensure the wrist is in a good position
- Begin snipping then progress to cutting

## Materials:

- Child-sized scissors with blunt safety blade
- Use scissors to cut more resistive materials instead of just paper such as old cards, construction paper, thin cardboard, playdough, and straws. Make it fun and engaging for the child
- Create or find scissor templates for the child to follow (see links below)

**Example:** click image to play the video



## Inclusive Practices to Consider:

- To increase thumb awareness, place a small sticker or happy face on the child’s thumb or the top of the scissor’s thumb loop. Cue child, “the happy face should always be smiling at you”
- Adapted scissors can be used for children with decreased muscle tone or coordination issues such as loop scissors, spring back scissors, or tabletop scissors (consult your school’s Occupational Therapist for the best choice)
- If left-handed use left-handed scissors

## Reference and Links:

The Ultimate Guide to Scissor Skills  
<https://www.theottoolbox.com/the-ultimate-guide-to-scissor-skills>

Scissor Skills Worksheets for Kids  
<https://www.allkidsnetwork.com/fine-motor-skills/scissor-skills.asp>

Cutting Skills Printable Worksheets Collection  
<http://www.attentionworksheets.com/cutting-skills-printables/>