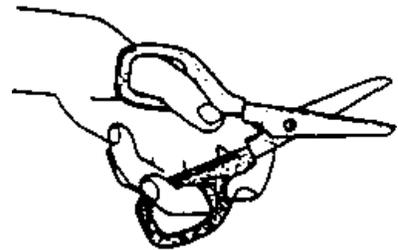


## Scissor Skills

*Cutting promotes bilateral skills, grasp/release, finger isolation and eye-hand coordination. Try and match the developmental level of the child to promote confidence while learning.*

### **Positioning:**

- Place the scissors on the table edge at a 90° angle to the child, with the thumbhole towards midline of the child.
- The child reaches with palm down, fingers out to grasp the scissors.
- Thumb in top loop of scissors.
- Index and middle fingers in the lower loop OR middle finger in the lower loop and index finger below the scissor blade.
- Thumbs on each hand should face upward.
- Fingers and thumb should only be inserted into the loops as far as the first joint in the fingers.
- Wrist should not be bent. Avoid this position by having the child rest his/her forearm on the table or in his/her lap.
- Point scissors away from the body, not parallel to the tummy when cutting.
- Hold paper/scissors low and parallel to the ground, at least 8-12" from the face.
- The hand holding the paper does most of the turning, while the scissors point forward.
- Right-handed children cut around the form in a counter-clockwise direction, while left-handed children cut in a clockwise direction.



### **Pre-Cutting Activity Suggestions:**

- Pretend the scissors are “talking to each other” by opening and closing them without paper. Use exaggerated movements to reinforce the opening and closing motion.
- Use scissor-like tools such as tongs, squirt guns, single hole punch etc. to reinforce the opening and closing motion required for scissor use. Make up games such as carrying objects using the tongs and releasing them into a container.
- Use scissors to snip resistive materials such as strips of playdough, construction paper, recipe cards, straws, old playing cards etc. that provide the child with feedback when cutting and are easier to control than a large piece of paper.

## Occupational Therapy

### Developmental Sequence for Cutting:

- ❑ Cut short random snips around the edge of a piece of paper.
- ❑ Cut across a paper strip the length of the scissor blades. It should only take one full snip to cut across the paper.
- ❑ Cut paper strips requiring two or three cuts. Remind the child to close the blades only halfway between each snip.
- ❑ Cut on wide lines across short strips of paper. As skill improves the child cuts on narrower lines across longer pieces of paper.
- ❑ Introduce slightly curved lines and show the child how to use their “helper hand” to turn the paper.
- ❑ Cut out squares, rectangles, and triangles. Show the child that he/she should cut the first straight line, stop, then use the “helper hand” to turn the paper. Cut just past the corner before turning the paper to ensure a sharp vs. rounded corner. Start with large shapes and gradually decrease the size.
- ❑ Cut on wide, wavy lines across short strips of paper. As skill improves the child cuts on narrower wavy lines across longer pieces of paper.
- ❑ Cut out large circles and semicircles. Progress to smaller shapes.
- ❑ Cut out simple pictures that involve both straight and curved lines.
- ❑ Cut out complex pictures containing irregular shapes.

### Strategies:

- ❑ Try to practice scissor skills consistently and for short periods of time.
- ❑ Encourage the child to say the required movements out loud while cutting (e.g. snip, open partway, stop, turn etc.)
- ❑ Teach the child to use his/her “helper hand” by placing dots beside the cutting line every couple of inches. Have the child place his/her thumb on the first dot and move to the next one as the scissors move forward.
- ❑ Practice cutting dot-to-dot or a path of hole punched paper. Cut from hole to hole. Progress to simple forms and then more complex forms.
- ❑ \_\_\_\_\_
- ❑ \_\_\_\_\_