



Pre-Cutting Skills

Before learning how to cut with scissors, it is helpful to practice all the movements that will be required in cutting:

Play Activities Which Develop Grasp with Thumb and First Two Fingers (required to control scissors):

- Pinch with spring-style clothespins to place clothespins along the top of a plastic container. For younger children, make mittens out of paper with different designs on them. Hang the mittens on a clothesline and have the child find the mitten matches. When they find a match, have them pin them to the clothesline. For older children, write letters or numbers on the end of each clothespin. Have the child sequence the letters in their names or do the alphabet or count to ten by clipping the clothespins onto the edge of a shoe box. For both younger and older children, have them pin any of their artwork on the clothesline.
- Play with small hand puppets to encourage movement of the first and third fingers while the last two fingers are curled.
- Pinch/squeeze/pull clay or playdough with the first three fingers.
- Play with lacing cards.
- String beads/macaroni.
- Use a toothpaste pump to put paste on toothbrush.
- Use thumb and first two fingers to pick up small objects (ie. paper clips, rubber bands, etc.) from a narrow-necked bottle or container (ie. a band-aid can).

Play Activities to Develop Opening and Closing Hands:

- Use a squirt gun or turkey baster to spray balloons that have had whipped cream faces drawn on them.
- Try squirting water into a pan of soap suds to make more bubbles or to sink floating toys.
- Use a spray bottle to mist plants.
- Squirt water from one bucket to another to mix different colors of water or to aim at targets.
- Hang balloons from the ceiling with string and make them move by aiming at them with squirt guns.
- Use squirt guns to draw water pictures on the sidewalk.
- Fill old ketchup or mustard squeeze bottles with colored water and make pictures or print letters in the snow.
- Use squirt guns or turkey basters to wash body paints off the child's or another child's hands.
- Play with squeeze toys in the bathtub.

Play Activities with Tools Similar to Scissors (ie. Salad/ice tongs, salad scissors, hole punch):

- Use tongs to pick up bells, aluminum foil balls, marshmallows, cotton balls, plastic toys, cookies, gummy worms, dinky toys, etc. Vary this activity by searching for objects hidden in a box of sand or submerged in a bucket of colored water.
- Have serving salad etc. with tongs be the child's supertime task.
- Use the handheld hole punch to make a lacing card.
- Use the hole punch on colored paper to make confetti.
- Using the hole punch, punch along a road drawn on a paper until a "destination" (ie. A candy or sticker stuck to the paper) is reached.