



Successful Scissoring

Have you ever wondered why young children have difficulty working with scissors? Managing scissors requires that a child combine fine motor skills—control and coordination of small muscles, especially hands, wrists, and eyes—with an intellectual task.

Closely related to motor development is physical growth and brain development. As the body grows physically and the brain develops, children are able to perform more intricate motor skills.

Most children are eager to cut with scissors. If a child is reluctant, it is probably because she is not ready.

A prerequisite to cutting with scissors is tearing, so we should allow young children many opportunities to practice tearing paper and materials such as lettuce and clay prior to teaching them how to use scissors.

In introducing kids to scissors, we first discuss safety rules and provide each child with appropriately designed scissors (initially with rounded points). So that we at school and you at home can work together on this skill, here is our approach to showing children how to use scissors.

Show them how to hold the scissors. Have them practice opening and closing the scissors several times before they try to cut paper. Show children how to hold the paper in one hand and the scissors in the other, to open the scissors and slip the paper between the blades, close the blades, then open them.

Let the children practice snipping small pieces of paper, old wrapping paper and greeting cards, and those catalogs and pieces of junk mail that you are recycling anyway. As the child develops proficiency, let him practice by cutting pictures from magazines, cutting along a straight line, and cutting along a curved line.

