

Parent Guide

How can I use this with my children?

Use this guide to help your child as they learn to use scissors correctly.

How does this help my children's learning?

Using scissors requires fine motor skills, which involve the control, coordination and strength of the hands and fingers.

Ideas for further learning:

Scissor grip and fine motor skills are also closely linked to the control needed for writing. You can learn more about how to develop your child's pencil grip with this [informative guide](#).



Helping to Develop Scissor Grip in the Early Years

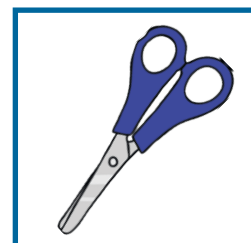
A Guide for Parents

A child's scissor grip typically develops along with other key physical skills, such as strength in their hands (particularly the fingers and wrists), hand-eye coordination and good balance while sitting upright. Though many preschoolers show interest in using scissors and can begin practising, **many children do not fully develop the correct grip or control until around 6 years old**. However, 'practise makes perfect' and there are many ways you can help your child to develop their scissor skills without even picking up a pair of scissors!

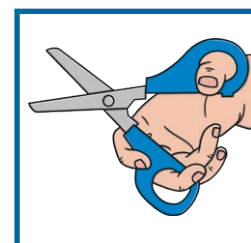
A key skill for scissor control is the ability to **grasp and release using the thumb and index finger**. This movement can be practised through activities such as pinching pegs, tweezers or tongs, using spray bottles, stapling or hole punching, playing with finger puppets and more. Any activity which encourages children to move their fingers independently of one another is great practise.



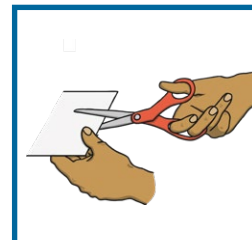
Before practising, it's important to have the correct equipment; ensure that **child-safe scissors** are available (with rounded ends, possibly made of plastic for younger ones) and that if your child is left-handed, they are using specialised left-handed scissors. You may also wish to discuss **scissor safety** with your child, such as not running with scissors, using them without an adult present or removing them from the crafting table. If they do need to walk while holding the scissors, they should hold them with the blades facing down towards the floor.



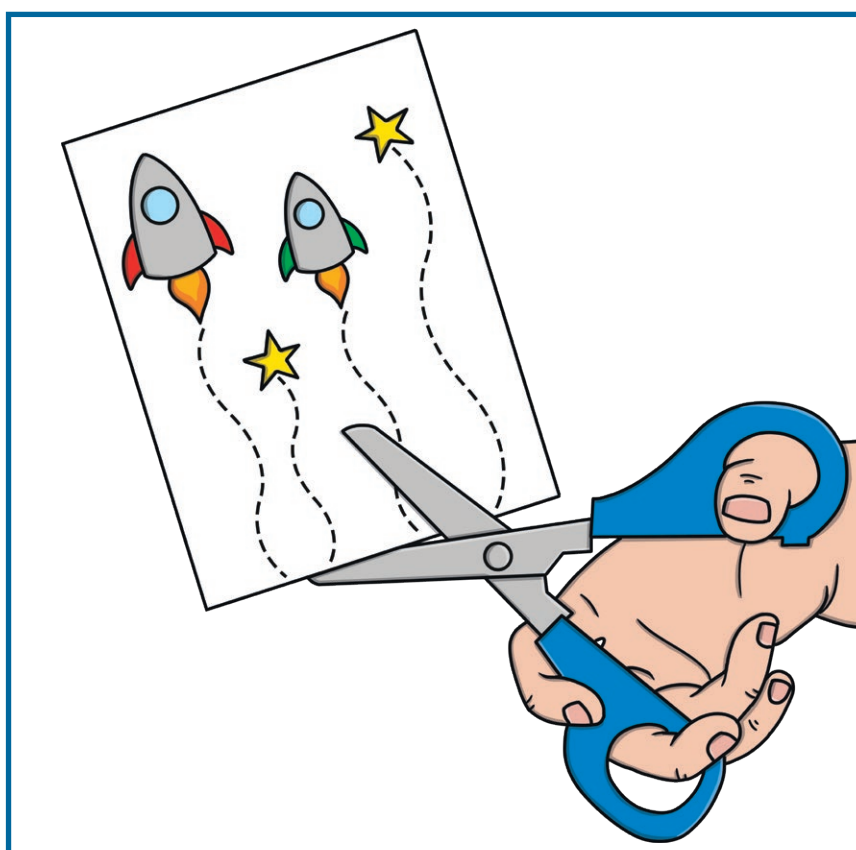
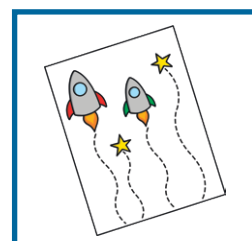
Encouraging the use of **correct scissor grip** from the beginning can help your child to develop their scissor skills with more accuracy. This can take some getting used to! A good rule to remember is 'thumbs up', as the thumb should go through the top hole (often the smaller hole) of the scissors; the index finger then guides along the side of the scissors and the middle finger goes through the bottom hole. Sometimes the bottom hole is larger and can also accommodate both the index and middle finger.



At first, many children will be so curious about using scissors that they won't be interested in cutting for purpose (e.g. following a line or cutting out a specific picture or shape). **Snipping activities** are good to help them get used to the movements; they could snip playdough and bits of paper - can they make strips or small squares? What about wool? Snipping card is a bit trickier, as the extra thickness can be tough to get through, but it's a great activity for strengthening the necessary muscles needed for using scissors.



When your child shows interest or when you feel they are controlling their scissors well enough, you may wish to move them on to **cutting for purpose**, namely following lines or cutting around specific shapes. For this, you could draw lines or use printable scissor skills guides to prompt their cutting skills or even use magazines or newspapers with boxes or pictures to cut around. Can they help to cut wrapping paper or sticky tape for a present or cut open a packet in the kitchen? Giving them purposeful uses for scissors can also inspire children to practise their grip, coordination and control!



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