

## Occupational Therapy Handout



### USING SCISSORS

#### Getting ready to practice cutting:

- ☺ Children often start to use scissors between the ages of three and four years. Your child may become very interested in watching you use scissors, or pretend they are doing cutting themselves.
- ☺ Your child is ready to start using scissors when they can do activities that involve both hands doing different things. For example, holding dolly/teddy whilst feeding with a spoon, using Duplo or tearing paper.
- ☺ Play activities such as finger puppets, hand rhymes and Playdoh will encourage development of your child's hand skills.
- ☺ Please note: If using plastic children's scissors, make sure they actually can cut paper.

#### Learning to open and close scissors:

Any activities and games that encourage your child to open and close their fingers will help prepare them to use scissors. For example playing:

- ☺ with sponges and transferring water
- ☺ with water pistols and spray bottles
- ☺ games using tongs or large tweezers to pick up small items
- ☺ with musical instruments such as castanets and finger cymbals.

#### Holding Scissors:

There are two ways your child could hold scissors to start with. See which works best for them:

- ☺ Option one: Hold scissors with the middle finger and thumb in the scissor loops, stabilising the lower loop with the index finger outside.
- ☺ Option two: Hold scissors with both the index and middle fingers placed in the lower loop.
- ☺ Make sure that their elbows are tucked in against the body and their thumb is 'on top' of the paper, rather than underneath.



#### Snipping:

- ☺ Start your child with things they can cut in half with one snip, such as thin strips of paper, drinking straws, or a thin 'sausage' of play dough.
- ☺ Your child can also 'fringe' (snipping around the edge of a piece of paper) before you encourage them to make two or three snips over a wider strip of paper.

#### Cutting lines:

- ☺ Draw thick lines on a piece of paper for your child to follow and gradually use thinner lines. You could also try using a hole punch to make a line of holes for them to cut along. Then progress to simple shapes like circles and squares.
- ☺ Make cutting fun and part of an activity, such as making paper chains or a collage.