



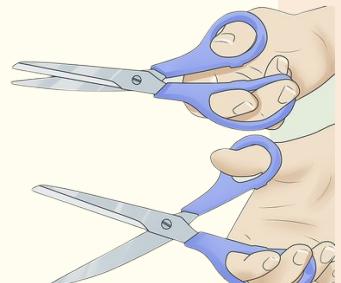
# Thumbs Up Cutting



## How to Hold Scissors

It is important to teach a child how to hold scissors. If a child starts to cut using a poor grasp, it can create habits that are difficult to correct. Proper grasp also supports accuracy with cutting and ensures the safe use of scissors.

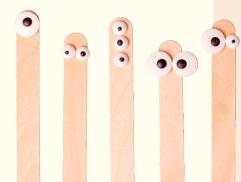
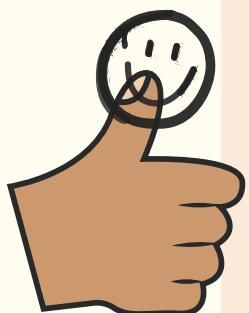
Children should be taught to place the thumb in one loop and the index and middle fingers in the other loop. Another option that some children prefer is to place the thumb in one loop and the middle finger in the other loop, with the index finger stabilizing and guiding the scissors along the bottom loop.



For both grasps, the thumb is always facing up. The ring and pinky fingers are curled into the palm.

Here are some ideas that will help them remember to hold the scissor correctly.

- Draw a smiley face on their thumbnail.
- Add a tiny sticker or dot on their thumbnail.
- Place a sticker on the outside of the scissor thumb loop.
- Add googly eyes to the outside of the scissor thumb loop
- Wrap a piece of washi tape or bright tape around the thumb loop
- “My thumb looks at the sun” (it almost rhymes)



## Practice, Practice, Practice

Children need practice time to learn any new skills. Try to keep it fun and play-based so children do not give up easily.

The skills needed to use scissors, begin at a very young age when babies begin to open and close their fingers to pick up small objects or little pieces of food. When babies crawl and push/pull toys, they build up the muscles in their shoulders and tummy to have the strength to use objects like crayons and pencils as they get older. These early fine motor skills and exercises help children build the foundational skills to use scissors.

### How Kids Develop Scissor Skills

Before learning how to teach a child to cut with scissors, it is important to know when the child should start using scissors correctly. In general, scissor skills progress as follows:

- **2 – 2.5 years old:** child snips edge of paper with scissors. May be able to use the other hand to hold the paper while cutting.
- **3 -3.5 years old:** child cuts on line across paper. Holds and starts to turn the paper with the other hand.
- **4-5 years old:** child cuts out simple shapes. Use the other hand to turn the paper with good accuracy.



### Tips to Develop Cutting Skills

1. **Use thicker paper when cutting.** Recycled mail, greeting cards or playing cards are fun and easier to cut up than regular paper.
2. **Use smaller paper.** Start out with paper that is not wide to have greater success.
3. **Draw a line from the edge of the paper to the object being cut out.** If a child needs to cut something out in the middle of a paper draw a straight line from the edge of the paper to the object for the child to cut along. You can make the line stand out by drawing it in their favourite colour, making it thicker or putting stickers along the line.
4. **Different scissors.** Standard scissors may not be the best choice for every child. There are many different types of scissors available and different ways to cut if a child can not use scissors.