

## Scissor Activities and the JK/SK Student – Lunch & Learn

**Goals:** *What to do we want to achieve?*

1) To transfer knowledge to teachers about:

- the motor demands of a skill frequently used as a part of kindergarten curriculum activities
- the typical developmental progression of scissor skills
- how to teach a motor-based activity to a full class

2) To help teachers:

- identify students who are not using scissors at a developmentally appropriate level
- determine if a student's challenges are due to lack of experience/practice with the tool, or if there may be possible coordination difficulties
- provide and adapt curriculum activities involving cutting to facilitate success for all students

**Activities:** *How can we achieve the goals?*

1) **Lunch and Learn:** 20-30 minutes seems to be a reasonable amount of time to expect the teachers to take out of their day for a lunch and learn. This can be offered during a nutrition or lunch break, at a team meeting, before or after school. Hands on activities with time for discussion seems to be appreciated by teachers.

**Materials Required** *Have these laid out so teachers can experiment with them as participants are gathering*

- ✓ variety of scissors, including left and right handed, loop, spring loaded, different sizes, small tongs, pompoms
- ✓ variety of cutting materials, including regular paper, cardstock and construction paper (all in a variety of sizes), straws, playdough
- ✓ variety of examples of curriculum based tasks that involve cutting (try to use examples from the classroom, from simple to complex)

**Handouts** SCISSOR SKILLS AND THE JK/SK STUDENT- O.T. TIPS

**Content** Use the handout as a guide for your lunch and learn and provide to teachers as a resource. (A power point presentation is also available if the technology is accessible and time allows)

1) Review AND demonstrate the typical developmental progression and grasps for using scissors - many kindergarten teachers are not aware of this progression, expecting students to arrive in kindergarten with fairly competent scissor skills and therefore present materials that are not developmentally appropriate.

- *encourage/facilitate discussion:* Anything surprise you about this typical developmental progression? Does this knowledge impact your planning of classroom

cutting activities?

- 2) Illustrate some of the required skills for cutting, and the challenges students may face using hands on activities:

Have the teachers cut a shape:

- ✓ standing on one foot (postural stability)
- ✓ wearing glasses to alter vision (vision)
- ✓ with a partner, one person cuts and one person turns the page (bilateral hand skills)
- ✓ wearing thick gloves (poor hand skills)
- ✓ looking in a mirror and cutting the shape (visual perception, spatial relations, body awareness, motor planning)
- ✓ out of heavy cardboard (strength)

*-encourage/facilitate discussion-* How did you feel when faced with this challenge?

Was the quality of your cutting impacted?

- 3) UDL and Differentiated Instruction: *encourage/facilitate discussion* around strategies/tools to facilitate participation of most students in curriculum activities involving scissor use, for example:

- ✓ being aware of the student's age and expected developmental level
- ✓ providing a variety of scissors (left/right handed, loop, spring loaded etc.)
- ✓ consider simple to complex options- straight lines vs curved and jagged lines, corners
- ✓ thicken/darken cutting line
- ✓ provide thicker paper
- ✓ use smaller sheets of paper
- ✓ provide pre-cut shapes/pictures

- 4) MATCH Strategies: introduce the MATCH acronym through demonstration of some of the strategies- allow teachers to try some of the strategies, for example:

- ✓ have the teachers cut out a flower shape from a large piece of regular paper, then try the same task on a smaller sheet of card stock with thickened, darkened borders

*-encourage/facilitate discussion*

### **Follow Up Suggestions:**

- Offer to do a teaching session with the entire class on using scissors.
- Offer to visit the classroom during an activity when scissors are being used to continue to demonstrate UDL, DI and MATCH strategies and to provide coaching to the teacher.
- Offer to meet with teachers individually to review scissor activities that are upcoming and help them analyze where problems might arise and how they might alter the task to make it more successful for more students.
- Set up a small group for students who are struggling with scissor use and work with them regularly to monitor their response to intervention.

## SCISSOR SKILLS AND THE JK/SK STUDENT O.T. TIPS

### Typical Developmental Milestones:



#### 2-3 years:

- often hold scissors with two hands to open and close
- begins to open and close the scissors with a mature grasp (see below)
- learns to snip paper; there is no forward movement of the scissors
- may be able to use “helping hand” to hold paper and bring into scissors



#### 3-4 years:

- cuts on straight lines with some accuracy
- cuts on curved lines and around corners, but without accuracy
- begins to turn the paper with “helping hand”



#### 4-5 years:

- can cut fairly accurately along curved lines and around shapes (circle, square and triangle)
- turns the paper fairly effectively with “helping hand” to stay on the line



#### 5-6 years:

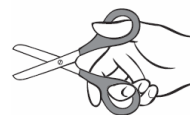
- progresses from cutting out simple to complex shapes and figures
- uses a mature scissor grasp consistently
- hands work in coordinated fashion to cut with scissors, hold and turn paper
- cuts smoothly i.e. no jagged edges or paper tears

Being able to use scissors correctly is a skill that develops in stages throughout the course of childhood. Cutting requires the integration of several skills, which include:

- shoulder, forearm and wrist stabilization
- fine motor dexterity
- eye-hand coordination
- coordination of both hands working together
- muscle strength
- motor planning

### Manipulation of and Grasp of Scissors

The correct scissor position is with the thumb in one loop and the index and middle fingers in the other loop. The remaining fingers are flexed into the palm. An alternate grasp is the thumb in one loop and the middle finger in the other loop, with the index finger stabilizing the scissors along the blade. Again, the other fingers are curled into the palm of the hand. The forearm is rotated so that the thumb is on top.



## Manipulation of and Grasp of Paper

The non-preferred hand, or “helping hand”, holds the paper. The thumb of the helping hand is on top of the paper with the other fingers flexed under the paper. The helping hand turns the paper, allowing the hand holding the scissors to cut out the desired shape.

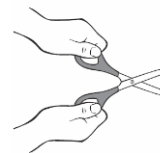
## When Should I Become Concerned?

Depending on hand skill development and previous exposure to and experience with scissors at home or in a preschool/day care setting, children enter kindergarten with varying degrees of scissor skills. With appropriate expectations, instruction and practice, most children should progress with their cutting skills. Children with motor coordination challenges will likely require the teacher to implement one or more of the strategies below to guide the child in mastering this developmental milestone.

## To Support and Encourage the Development of Scissor Skills, Use the M.A.T.C.H. Strategy:

### Modify the task:

- use card stock paper, old playing cards or greeting cards as they are stiffer and easier to cut and to manipulate with the “helping hand”
- use quarter or half sheets of paper rather than full sheets as they are easier for little hands to hold and manipulate
- simplify the complexity of cutting required by drawing a straight line between two objects or a simple shape such as a circle or square around the object to be cut out
- make the line to cut thicker and bolder, gradually narrow as accuracy improves
- provide precut shapes or stickers if the goal of the activity is not specifically cutting



### Alter Your Expectations:

- provide activities to develop hand strength and pre-cutting skills if the child is at an early stage:
  - put objects (pompoms work well) in plastic cups with large tongs; the helping hand should hold the cup steady
  - to develop finger strength, play with spray bottles, squirt guns, one-hole or scrapbooking punchers, play dough and platercine
  - provide scissors at playdough/platercine activities for snipping against resistance to develop strength
  - tear paper with two hands and create a picture with the pieces
  - make scissors “talking puppets or alligators”-practice opening and closing to made them talk
  - snip drinking straws into pieces to make necklaces
  - snip narrow strips of paper into pieces- glue onto paper to make “mosaic” pictures

- provide practice through graded activities with which the student can experience success:
  - glue two pieces of cardboard to a piece of paper with a 2-3 cm gap in between so the child can cut in the gap; gradually decrease the gap
  - when drawing lines for the child to cut, begin by drawing 2-3 cm wide straight paths, gradually reducing the width to a pencil line
  - start with short (8-10 cm) lines and increase length gradually
  - introduce curves, corners and shapes as skills progress
  - draw shapes with straight lines (squares, triangles etc.) that can be assembled into an object the child is interested in such as a rocket ship, house or robot after cutting them out
  - trace the shape to be cut with a thick, bold line, gradually decreasing its width until it is a thin line

## Teaching Strategies:

- encourage the idea that our two hands have different jobs, the “helper hand” holds the paper and the “doer” hand holds the scissors
- teach “thumbs up” for both hands
- place a visual cue on the thumb side of the scissors to reinforce the “thumbs up” position
- explicitly teach/model how to hold and cut with scissors, using demonstration with verbal cuing to accommodate the visual and auditory learners



## Change the Environment:

- provide a chair/table that allows the child to have feet on the floor and elbows/forearms resting comfortably and supported on the table surface
- provide an alternate type of scissors (e.g: loop scissors, spring loaded scissors)

## Help by Understanding:

- support the child by understanding students will have different skill levels with cutting and provide options for success
- reward any effort towards independence made by the child to reinforce the “I can do it” attitude!

# Scissor Skills Development

Lisa Tong, O.T. Reg. (Ont.)



# Typical Developmental Milestones

- 2-3 years – holds scissors with two hands, learns to snip paper, may be able to use “helping hand to hold paper
- 3-4 years – cuts on straight lines, cuts on curves and corners, but inaccurately, begins to turn paper with “helping hand”
- 4-5 years – can cut fairly accurately along curves and around simple shapes, turns paper with “helping hand”
- 5-6 years – uses a mature scissor grasp, hands work in a co-ordinated manner, cuts smoothly

# Skills needed

- Sitting balance and stability
- Stable shoulders
- Arm and wrist control
- Fine motor skills – isolation of thumb and fingers, grasp and release
- Bilateral integration
- Visual and visual motor skills



# Teaching Strategies

- “Thumb on top” – can use a sticker cue
- Introduce the concept of the “scissor hand” and the “helper hand”
- Holding the paper with non cutting hand – thumb on top, close enough to support the paper, but avoiding fingers
- Cutting away from the body
- Turning the page, not your scissors



# VIDEO

- Video clip of DCD student during cutting activity

# Experiential Activity

- Various experiential activities which simulate why some students may experience difficulties with scissors

# Pre-Scissor/Early Scissor Activities

- Using tongs, tweezers, clothes pins, medicine droppers, turkey basters
- Snip straws into pieces to make necklaces
- Cutting playdoh
- Beading, lacing
- Squirt guns, spray bottles, single hole punchers
- Making “mosaic pictures” using narrow strips of paper
- Snipping strips of paper
- Straight lines  $\Rightarrow$  corners  $\Rightarrow$  curves

# Classroom Strategies

- Size of scissors – shorter blade is easier to manipulate
- Use of stiffer paper – construction paper, card stock, playing cards --- easier to cut and manipulate with “helper hand”
- Use quarter or half sheets of paper – easier to manipulate
- Simplify the image by drawing a square or circle around the image so that the student doesn’t have to cut the complex shape
- Make lines thicker and gradually narrow as accuracy improves
- Use of stickers, dots or hole punches to cue turning corners

# Experiential Activities

- Now try the previous experiential activities using some of the classroom strategies discussed

# Adaptive Scissors



Instructional video for parents about how to use scissors

<http://video.about.com/babyparenting/Using-Scissors.htm>

QUESTIONS???