

Nursery Progression Map: Cutting Skills

Progression of cutting skills	Vocabulary	How to support?
Holds scissors, often with both hands, learning to open and close the blades	Hold, move, in, out, open, shut, close, bend, Cut, snip, squeeze, stretch, fold, knead, push, pull	Practice tearing paper Strengthen fingers – use soft balls, playdough, toys filled with beans/sand
Opens/closes blades (not ready to use them on paper yet)	Open, move apart, close, shut, move in/out, fingers, thumb, together, apart, stretch, up, down	Practise opening and closing blades on playdough, in the sand or shaving foam, progressing to more firm materials like modelling clay Encourage 'thumbs up' position
Starts snipping paper (not moving forward with the scissors but making small snips)	Snip, cut, hold, forward, backwards	Practice snipping, using foam sheets at first, to practice holding paper and snipping one handed Progress to thicker paper e.g. sugar paper for easier handling You could draw straight lines on the foam to introduce the idea of going forward, if ready
Snips paper moving forward	Across, forward, backward, side to side, straight ahead	Practice activities to promote crossing the mid-line of the body e.g. passing a ball from left to right, or filling up a pot on the left with the toys placed on the right
Uses helping hand to hold and help to guide the paper (non-dominant hand)	Upwards, downwards, sideways, hold still, rest your hand, hands together/apart, up and down	Promote activities to strengthen bilateral coordination e.g. lacing cards, holding a stencil with one hand and drawing with another, hand clapping games
Cuts straight line (within ½ inch from the drawn line, improving in accuracy)	Straight, across, forward, open and shut, move, together/apart, follow the line, close to	Use a piece of paper that is up to 6 inches long
Cuts curved line (a 1/4inch curved line, within 1/4inch from the line drawn)	Closer, on the line, next to the line, circle, curve, around, round, wobbly, wavy	
Cuts circle shape (a circle of 6inch in diameter, within ½ from the drawn line, improving to about ¼ inch)	Circle, oval, round, curved, wavy Move, twist, turn, pivot Small snips, at the same time	
Cuts square shape	Stop/start, turn, point, corner, pointed, cross,	
Cuts complex shapes, such as figures.	Close to the line, on the line, outline, follow the line, background,	