Scissor Skills at Home

Play-based activities for snipping and cutting








Ages 3 to 5 **40 activities**

Cutting · Bilateral hand use · Visual motor

What's inside

The activities go from first squeezes and snips to cutting on lines and around shapes, and most build more than one skill. Start where your child feels comfortable.

Ready to cut

Squeezing, opening and closing games that get little hands ready for scissors.

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First snips

Single snips through straws, yarn, tape and paper fringe.

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Before you start

Every activity in this book comes from OTPlan and uses everyday things like paper, paper plates, paper rolls and masking tape. There's no wrong way to play. Follow your child's lead and keep it fun.

How to use this book

Keep it short. Most activities take 15 to 30 minutes.

Let your child choose. Their interest is the best guide.

Adjust as you go. Every page has an easier and a harder version.

Stop while it's still fun. You can always come back another day.

Check off the days you play in the tracker on page 45. If your child sees a therapist, bring the book along.

How each page works

Time and place
How long it takes, setup time, and where to play

Skills it builds
The skills the activity works on

You'll need
Everyday materials to gather first

How to play
Step-by-step directions

Easier and harder
Ways to adjust to your child

What to notice
Things to watch for and share with your child's therapist

Things you'll use most

- [ ] Construction paper
- [ ] Masking tape
- [ ] Crayons
- [ ] Cardboard
- [ ] Child-safe scissors
- [ ] Markers
- [ ] Paper plates
- [ ] Tissue paper
- [ ] Pom-poms
- [ ] Glue
- [ ] Yarn
- [ ] Stickers
- [ ] Tempera paint

Each activity page lists everything it needs.

Safety. Stay close while your child uses scissors. Small items like pom-poms, buttons, straw pieces and hole punch dots can be choking hazards, and paper food is for pretend play, not for eating. A few setups use a knife or a stapler. Those steps are for a grown-up.

These activities are for home practice and don't replace the guidance of a licensed therapist.

Balloon Haircut Day

10 to 15 minutes **Setup: 10 minutes** **At a wall or easel**



Skills it builds

Bilateral Hand Use | Cutting | Proximal Stability

You'll need

- [ ] Balloon
- [ ] Markers
- [ ] Masking Tape
- [ ] Scissors
- [ ] Yarn

Why it helps

This fun game helps your child practice using scissors. Cutting yarn hair off a balloon requires steady hands. It teaches your child to use both hands together. One hand stays steady while the other snips. This builds the shoulder stability needed for writing. It also makes learning a big kid skill feel like play.

> **Choking risk:** balloons can be a choking hazard. Stay within arm's reach, and keep them away from children who still put things in their mouths. Throw away popped balloon pieces right away.

How to play

1. Blow up a balloon and tie it securely.
2. Draw a funny face on the balloon using markers.
3. Cut several long pieces of yarn hair.
4. Tape the yarn hair to the top of the balloon.
5. Secure the balloon to a wall or door using masking tape at your child's chest height.
6. Encourage your child to use safety scissors to trim the yarn hair.

Make it easier

- Make the hair from strips of construction paper, which are much easier to snip than yarn.
- Hold the end of each yarn strand tight for your child so the scissors have something firm to cut.
- Tape the balloon face to the table instead of the wall so your child can cut while sitting.

Make it harder

- Ask your child to give the balloon bangs by cutting the front strands shorter than the back.
- Wrap a small piece of tape around each strand as a marker and ask for the cut right at the tape.
- Trim every strand in order from left to right without skipping any.

In everyday life. Holding a strand tight with one hand while cutting with the other is the same teamwork kids use to cut string or ribbon for crafts and trim a piece of tape off the roll.

What to notice

Notice whether your child's helper hand pulls the yarn tight while the cutting hand snips.

Watch how your child's arm holds up while cutting at chest height. Short breaks can help if the arm starts to droop.

If your child is worried about the balloon popping, swap it for a paper plate face taped to the wall.

Safety. Always supervise your child while they are using scissors. If the balloon pops, pick up the pieces immediately. Broken balloon pieces are a choking hazard.

We played M T W T F S S

Paper Chain

20 to 30 minutes **Setup: 5 minutes** **At a table**



Skills it builds

Bilateral Hand Use · Cutting · Sensory Processing

You'll need

- [ ] Construction Paper
- [ ] Glue
- [ ] Markers
- [ ] Masking Tape
- [ ] Scissors

Why it helps

Cutting long strips is great practice for cutting straight across a whole page. Each strip becomes a link, so your child sees the chain grow with every cut. Pinching the glued ends together also builds finger strength.

How to play

1. Before play, use a thick marker to draw straight lines across several colors of construction paper, about two fingers apart.
2. Show your child the thumb-up grip, with the thumb in the small loop on top.
3. Ask your child to cut along each line while the helper hand holds the paper steady.
4. Put a dot of glue on one end of a strip and curl it into a loop, pressing the ends together.
5. Slide a new strip through the loop, then glue its ends together to add a link.
6. Keep adding links in any color order your child picks.
7. Hang the chain across a doorway or count the links together.

Make it easier

- Draw the lines extra thick and far apart.
- Close each loop with a piece of masking tape instead of glue.
- Cut shorter strips from a half sheet of paper.

Make it harder

- Draw thinner lines closer together.
- Make a color pattern, like red, blue, yellow, and keep it going.
- Cut wavy strips for a wiggly chain.

In everyday life. Cutting straight across a page helps with school crafts and cutting out tickets or coupons. Pinching and holding builds strength for snaps and zippers.

What to notice

Notice whether the helper hand moves up the strip as the cut gets longer.

Watch whether your child keeps the thumb on top of the scissors.

See if your child holds each loop closed long enough for the glue to stick.

Safety. Stay close while your child uses scissors and keep the blades pointed away from the body. Hang the finished chain up high, and never around anyone's neck.

We played M T W T F S S

Therapy Snowman

20 to 30 minutes **Setup: 10 minutes** **At a table**



Skills it builds

Cutting · Visual Motor · Motor Planning

You'll need

- [ ] Construction Paper
- [ ] Craft Sticks
- [ ] Glue
- [ ] Markers
- [ ] Pom-poms
- [ ] Scissors
- [ ] Tissue Paper

Why it helps

Circles are a great first curve. Your child turns the paper a little at a time while the scissors keep moving forward. Building a snowman from the circles shows how their cutting turns into something fun.

> **Choking risk:** pom-poms can be a choking hazard. Stay within arm's reach, and keep them away from children who still put things in their mouths.

How to play

1. Before play, draw a big circle and a smaller circle on white construction paper. Tracing around a bowl and a cup works well.
2. Ask your child to cut out both circles, turning the paper slowly.
3. Glue the big circle near the bottom of a sheet of blue construction paper and the small circle on top for the head.
4. Ask your child to draw a face with markers.
5. Cut a strip of tissue paper for a scarf and glue it at the neck.
6. Glue on pom-poms for buttons and two craft sticks for arms.

Make it easier

- Draw thick circle lines, or draw a square around each circle and cut that instead.
- Make the circles big, at least as wide as your hand.
- Use stickers for the buttons instead of pom-poms.

Make it harder

- Add a third, middle-sized circle for a taller snowman.
- Cut a hat shape from black paper.
- Ask your child to trace the circles before cutting.

In everyday life. Cutting circles helps with school crafts and holiday decorations. Lining up pieces builds the planning used for building with blocks.

What to notice

Notice whether the helper hand turns the paper or the scissors do the turning.

Watch whether your child's cuts stay smooth or get choppy around the curve.

See if your child can line up the circles to stack the snowman.

Safety. Stay close while your child uses scissors. Pom-poms are small, so keep them away from mouths and put them away after play.

We played M T W T F S S

8-week play tracker

Check a box on each day you play. Write down the activity your child liked best.

Week	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	Favorite activity
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								

Activities to play again

Notes for your child's therapist

Jot down what you notice as you play. The **What to notice** box on each activity page can help. Bring this page to your child's next visit.

What my child enjoyed

Which activities did they ask for again?

What seemed tricky

Where did they get stuck or want help?

Changes I noticed

Anything that got easier over the weeks?

Questions I want to ask