

# Cutlery skills

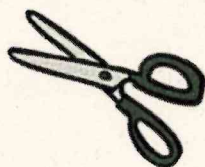
## Activities

The following two handed activities require similar skills as for cutlery use. They should be carried out with adult supervision.

- @ Colouring – steady the paper with one hand whilst the other colours.
- @ Construction games – E.g. Lego, bead threading, K'nex.
- @ Cooking / Baking – any two handed task, e.g. mixing bowl and spoon
- @ Hammering activities e.g. Tap-a-Shape, toy worktools
- @ Opening screw top bottles and jars.
- @ Using a dustpan and brush – keep the dustpan still whilst moving the brush.
- @ Using play dough / modelling material– use cutlery to cut.
- @ Using scissors – progress from easy to complex shapes. Please see 'scissor skills' advice sheet.



## Preparation



- @ Sit with good posture. Please see 'sitting' advice sheet.
- @ Check the plate is steady.
- @ Use appropriate sized cutlery.
- @ Check the cutlery is held effectively, using index fingers on the top of the cutlery instead of grabbing with the whole hand.
- @ Expect some messiness and tearing of food until cutlery skills are mastered.
- @ Only expect a few minutes' practice initially and gradually build up to using cutlery for the whole meal.
- @ Consider practising at snack time, or towards the end of the meal when your child is less hungry and able to concentrate.



# Practice



These ideas will help with practicing cutlery skills during mealtimes.

- Physical hand over hand help may help the child hold the cutlery effectively and feel the required movements of each hand.
- Start with cutting soft foods (mashed potato, fish fingers) and progress to tougher food (pie, meats).



- Slow down, stab food with the fork and then saw into bite-size pieces with the knife.
- Talk through the steps with clear simple commands.
- Give praise throughout.

# Adjustments

The following items could assist with developing your child's cutlery skills however this list is not exhaustive. Please find purchasing information under resources.

- Caring Cutlery. This has moulded handles to promote efficient grip and placement of index fingers.



- Dycem. This non-slip matting will help stabilise the plate/bowl.
- Plastazote Tubing. This foam tubing can be slipped onto cutlery in order to thicken and soften the handles. It can help improve control over the cutlery.
- Plateguard. This plastic rim clips onto a plate so that food does not slide off.

