Teaching crafty children

Teaching a little one to use scissors seems to inspire fear in a lot of parents, however, a good sturdy pair of scissors with safety blades means that even a toddler can handle a pair of scissors and an adult's blood pressure can remain stable!

"There seems to be a lot of concern about when is the 'best' time to introduce scissor skills to a child's crafty repertoire," says leading craft expert, Shannon Wong-Nizic, from OhCreativeDay.

Here are Shannon's top tips for parents looking to teach their young child how to cut safely and effectively:

- Open-shut them - The first skill to learn is opening and closing the scissors. This is when a spring-assisted pair of scissors is a good choice. Around the age of two, a child will often open the scissors with both hands. At this stage of development, they aren't ready to begin cutting paper. Cutting playdough is a great way to encourage strengthening hands and growing accustomed to the open/close nature of using scissors.
- Thumbs up - From the start, it's important to remind children of the 'thumbs up' position while holding scissors. The thumb is placed in the smaller hole and the fingernail must face the ceiling. Draw a smiley face on a child's thumbnail when they are first learning to hold scissors, making sure that the smile is facing the ceiling at all times when cutting.
- Snip snip - Once opening and closing the scissors has been mastered, kids can move onto practising snipping paper. They are not moving the paper forward as they cut, simply snipping.
- Cut and hold - Around the age of three, children can begin moving scissors forward along paper to cut. After this skill is acquired, children begin also using their non-dominant hand to hold the paper and move it to allow cutting with the dominant hand. Children at this stage can begin to cut along straight lines, with varying accuracy.
- Around the bend - From straight lines, children then move to curved lines. From lines, they then move onto basic shapes. By about the age of five, children can begin to cut more complex shapes with increased accuracy.
- The right tools for the job - When it comes to scissor skills, having a top-quality pair of scissors is a must. Shannon learnt the hard way with her firstborn when she attempted to introduce scissors with her, using cheap scissors that caused much toddler angst.

Mum, teacher and craft expert Shannon Wong-Nizic shares her tips for teaching kids scissor skills. Picture: SUPPLIED

There is nothing worse than a frustrated toddler bearing scissors! Shannon Wong-Nizic is a teacher, mum of three and avid crafter. An enthusiastic fan of pom poms, PVA and paint, she runs popular blog and online parenting resource dedicated to all things creative, ohcreativeday.com and has over 30,000 followers on Instagram.

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