

## Tying shoe laces

Shoelaces are best learned one step at a time.

### Suggested strategies

In preparation it may be helpful to play some games that help children to learn some of the skills used. Here are some ideas to try:

- Ripping paper and card - to increase hand strength needed when tightening the lace
- Paper weaving, sewing games – can help you understand how the lace goes behind and is posted through
- Tying bows with ribbon, as this is less likely to slip
- Dressing toys such as dolls and teddies give good practice opportunities
- Threading beads onto a string
- Obstacle courses – practising concepts of under, over, around and through. Try copying these in a sequence

### General principles

- Lace a shoe using two different coloured laces, it's easier for them to what goes where.
- Sit them in a comfortable, balanced position, with their back against something for support
- Always practice using thicker “fluffier” laces as opposed to thin elastic type laces that you may find in some shoes. The thinner laces tend to come undone much more quickly.
- It is easier to practice laces if the shoe is on their lap initially rather than on the foot. Once your child has got some idea about the task, it is easier for your child to see what they are doing if they are seated with their foot (and shoe) on a small stool or chair in front of them.
- Shoe templates can be purchased from Early Learning shops and are useful for practice purposes.

## Steps to follow

### **Making a knot:**

- Take hold of the laces, one in each hand, then cross the laces over
- Where the lace has crossed, hold this in one hand
- Pass the upper lace under the lower lace, through the hole, in a toe to heel direction
- Grasp the end of each lace and pull tight to the sides

### **Making the bow:**

- Make a loop with one of the laces. NB Make sure some of the lace is kept out of the loop
- Make a second loop with the other lace
- Cross the 2 loops over keeping hold of the loops at all times
- Hold the loops in one hand keeping this hand still for the rest of the procedure
- With the other hand, post the loop through as you did when tying the lace
- Pull the end of the loops to make the lace tight

Alternatives: Toggles, Velcro, Greeper laces ([www.greeper.com](http://www.greeper.com))

1. Your child needs to show an interest in scissors. Ask your child to touch their thumb and forefinger together several times, as if they were cutting with a pair of scissors. They can then attempt to bring the scissors and paper together and imitate cutting action
2. The child will learn to hold and manipulate the scissors correctly
3. The child will learn to open and close the scissors in a controlled fashion. If they are finding it difficult to cut paper then try just snipping the edges, encourage random or 'free' cutting or snipping
4. Encourage the child to hold paper in one hand and scissors in the other. Encourage the child to make short random snips with the scissors. Do not ask the child to cut in a forward motion (i.e. moving arm forwards) or in a specific direction as this comes at a later stage of development
5. The child will now learn to cut in a forward motion. Create a mark on the paper, which the child can aim towards with the scissors. Using stiff paper such as card can help with achieving this skill at the early stages
6. The child continues to develop their cutting skills in a forward motion but now staying on a line. Start by asking them to cut within a thick line, e.g. within a 15cm width, gradually reducing the width as they perfect this skill
7. Once the child can cut on a straight line, you can move on to cutting out simple shapes such as a square and triangle. Allow the child plenty of opportunities to practise and provide a lot of encouragement. At this stage it will be easier for the child to start with cutting out squares, triangles and rectangles, as they would have already learnt cutting in a straightline. Once they have mastered cutting out these shapes, move on to circles and semi-circles. These are more complicated as they aren't straight lines
8. The child will then move on to cutting out figure shapes. At first they will keep the scissors straight and turn the paper when there is a curve or change of direction. As they become more skilled, they will learn to hold the paper still and turn the scissors instead. Gradually move on to more complex designs and objects.

#### Useful resources

Easy-grip scissor

Left handed scissors

Spring loaded scissors

All available from good stationery shops or [www.specialdirect.com](http://www.specialdirect.com)