

Hair washing / cutting / brushing - Sensory

Helpful Tips:

- Prepare child before hair washing/cutting/brushing so they know what to expect.
- Involve the child in the activity as much as possible i.e. Holding flannel, see below.
- Ensure the environment is set up with everything needed for the activity
- Keep a calm manner and reassure the child at regular intervals.
- Keep auditory and visual stimuli to the minimum to create a calm environment
- Establish regular routine e.g. time of day/day in week



Preparing your child for hair washing/cutting/brushing

- Place your hands on top of child's head and exert gentle but consistent pressure down – make sure head and neck are aligned straight. Do not use this strategy for children with Down's Syndrome!
- Place your hands or get your child to put hands on sides of head and squeeze with firm pressure
- Wear a tight fitting hat prior to help desensitise.
- Apply firm pressure to shoulders and arms if required.
- Sit the child firmly on your lap or you could squeeze the child between your knees
- Consider seating and position of the child
- Ensure the child is aware of when you are going to touch their head
- The use of social stories about the activity beforehand

During the activity

- Use a firm stroke or pressure as you comb or wash your child's hair
- Have your child count as you comb, wash, cut or rinse the hair – give definite time limits to the task e.g. "let's count to 10"
- Give your child ownership and control with hair washing by allowing them to pour the water
- Fold a flannel over the child's eyes to reduce water getting into their eyes.
- Tip head back before pouring water over
- Firm touch when massaging shampoo
- Use fragrant free shampoo
- Use a soft hair brush- tangle teaser
- Hold top of hair whilst brushing out tangles
- Use a large towel and quickly and firmly wrap the child in it, providing deep touch to extremities
- Give the child something to squeeze and handle in their hands