



Sensory-Hair Cutting

The majority of children who are hyper responsive to information from the tactile sense find it difficult to cope with having their hair cut. Listed below are some strategies that can assist in making this activity less stressful for both parent and child.

Hair cutting without tears

When ever possible have the child's hair cut in an environment that he/she perceives as familiar and safe. If is not possible for the hairdresser to come to the home, use a quiet salon or arrange to visit the salon at a quiet time i.e. late opening etc.

Whenever possible have the child's hair cut by a person who is familiar to the child and who has built up a relationship with the child i.e. family member or close friend.

If possible have the child orientate to the environment by taking them there when you or one of their siblings are having a cut, before he has his hair cut.

Whenever possible use the same hairstylist and if appropriate talk through the child's difficulties with hair cutting with the stylist prior to visiting the salon.

If the child has auditory sensitivity, encourage the stylist to use a calm reassuring voice low voice when talking to them. Ask them not to play loud stimulating music, instead ask them to play some calming music such as Mozart or other classical/calming pieces of music. Also avoid noisy hairdressers or using an electric hair cutter to cut their hair

Prior to the visit, discuss the process with the child, giving ideas of procedure, time scale etc. If appropriate prepare a picture schedule for the child.

Whenever possible ensure that the visit to the hairdressers is followed by a favoured activity/ reward. If appropriate let the child know about this prior to the visit or put it on his schedule.

If tolerated, provide the child with a deep scalp massage prior to the visit to the hairdresser to reduce sensitivity.

If appropriate have the child take a piece of equipment/toy that helps to calm e.g. vibrating toy/cushion, weighted cushion to place on their lap, favourite fiddle toy etc.

Allow the child opportunities to wipe off stray hairs during the cut as they may irritate his face, neck etc. Provide them with a suitable brush or cloth to assist with this.

Beware of capes with Velcro fastenings as they may irritate the child's neck ; buttons or fasteners are better. It may be better to bring your own cape or towel that is familiar to the child.

Bring an extra top for him to wear after the cut as he may be irritated by stray hairs.

Holding the child on your lap if tolerable or wrapping them tightly in a towel or blanket can help them to remain calm while having their hair cut.

If your child's tolerance for hair cutting is very low, you may need to cut it over the course of a couple of days or even weeks. Keeping him/her still for a whole hair cut may be too stressful for you and the child



Document Title