



Applying Sensory Strategies for Personal Care

This information sheet aims to help you and your child with personal care activities

Dressing:

- If your child cannot tolerate labels cut them out and try to leave the remaining seam smooth
- If your child has difficulty tolerating seams, try wearing undergarments to reduce friction
- Try washing clothes in unscented products

Toileting

- Try using wet wipes as the child may be sensitive to the texture of toilet roll
- Do the child's feet touch the floor? They may need a foot step or seat insert to feel more secure
- Consider visual and auditory stimulation around and try to keep it to a minimum

Hair Care

- Be aware of the smell of shampoo, noise of the clippers/scissors, feel of the cut hair on their skin as it is cut may be distressing for the child and try to minimise sensory input where possible
- Place your hands on your child's head and exert gentle pressure down prior to hair washing/cutting
- Use firm pressure as you brush/comb their hair
- Familiarise your child with the salon environment before taking them to have their hair cut
- Ensure your child is seated securely on a chair or your lap prior to hair cutting
- Try to approach from in front so they see you rather than from behind

General information

- Try cutting nails after having a bath when nails are softer and use clippers rather than scissors
- If your child is having difficulties getting to sleep try a relaxing warm bath and provide a firm massage using lotion if your child will tolerate it. Try relaxing music or gentle lighting.
- If they are fussy eaters and dislike certain textures/tastes try introducing these gradually by encouraging the child to look at it first, then touch it, hold it to their mouth, lick it, taste in their mouth and spit it out and eventually eat it. Do not force the child if they are not ready and reward them for trying it. Encourage them to be involved in preparing the food.

If your child dislikes having his/her face or body washed encourage them to wash themselves. Self-initiated touch produces a less defensive reaction.