

## Hair care

For some children the mention of brushing, washing or cutting hair is enough to send them running in the opposite direction! It's one of those necessary tasks which some children find particularly challenging. There are many ways to make hair care less daunting and some of these ideas are shared below.

### **Preparation**

- Having a regular routine for hair care can help keep the hair in good condition and keep problems at bay.
- Talk to your child and find out what it is they don't like about hair washing.
- Ensure that you have everything that you need for the activity to hand.
- Try to keep calm and reassure your child at regular intervals throughout your hair care task.
- Involve your child in the activity as much as possible.
- Talk to your child throughout so they know when you are going to touch their head.
- Use a mirror so that they can see what is happening.
- Use "first/then" cues e.g. first we are going to wash, then we are going to rinse.
- Give a definite time limit to the task and stick to it, or count as you comb, brush or rinse.
- Distraction often helps – let your child watch their favourite programme during the activity.
- Use role play or make it a game, encourage your child to take turns with their favourite toy.

### **Top tips for washing hair**

- Get the temperature of the water "just right" ask your child if they are happy with it by testing it on their arm first.
- Use waterproof ear plugs to prevent water going inside their ears, this can also dull down the acoustics in an echoing bathroom.
- Use visors or goggles to stop water or shampoo getting into your child's eyes.
- Try using fragrance free, low sud or tear-free shampoo.
- Try different methods of rinsing your child's hair to see which they prefer, e.g. squirt bottle, watering can, jug, different shower head settings.
- Use leave-in conditioner on longer hair so that hair only has to be rinsed once.
- Comb conditioner through, this is especially helpful if their hair gets knotty.
- Wash hair less and use dry shampoo in between washes.

### **Top tips for combing or brushing hair**

- Encourage your child to sit in a comfortable chair or bean bag (whichever they feel more comfortable in).
- Comb or brush the hair when it is wet
- Use a leave-in conditioner or detangling spray, this will make the hair easier to comb through.
- Start with a wide tooth detangling comb or tangle teaser brush and work in long strokes, pulling the comb/brush completely off their head each time.
- If the ends are knotted, comb or brush through the ends first and work your way up to combing/brushing from the scalp.
- Apply firm pressure to the scalp when brushing or combing, if working through tangles at the end, apply firm pressure to the base of your child's head so that their hair is not being pulled.
- Let your child practise on you, teach them these top tips so they know how to manage tangled hair.

- Let them practise on themselves in front of a mirror, you may wish to start them off and let them finish the job.
- If your child has long hair, plait or braid it, this prevent it getting tangled.



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### Top tips for visiting the hairdresser

- Role play hairdressers and read books beforehand so your child knows what to expect.
- Take your child to observe a family member having their hair cut.
- Prepare your child for visiting the hair dresser, if going to a new salon, it may be worth going there for a visit first, or trying a social story beforehand.
- Find a hair dresser that specialises in cutting children's hair. They are very good at cutting whilst a child is wriggling or they may have the salon set up especially for children.
- If going to a salon is too distressing, try a mobile hairdresser who will cut your child's hair in your own home, where your child will be more comfortable.
- Let your child's hair dresser know if they are feeling anxious, they can talk your child through what is going to happen.
- Use visuals during the haircut to help your child understand what will happen.
- Let the child sit on your lap whilst they are having their hair cut.
- Bring your child's favourite hand held toy to the chair, this will help to keep them occupied or distracted.

### Useful Resources

#### Safe Shampoo Hair Washing Shield (from £6.59)

Make bath time easier and more fun, by blocking water from entering your child's eyes and ears with this ergonomically designed visor. Made from silicone it is light but also sturdy. Suitable for all ages as it has adjustable fasteners on the cap. Fits head circumference 16.5-22.8 inches.



#### Munchkin Soft-Rim Easy Rinser (from £4.98)

Rinse the soap away with ease for tear-free bath time. Soft, flexible design contours to child's head. Comfortable, easy-grip handle. Easy to clean, just wash and let air dry. 6+ months



#### Tangle Teezer brush (from £8.98)

This Tangle Teezer brush has memory flex technology for speedy and gentle results; ideal on wet or dry hair. Enhanced design delivers painless and optimum de-tangling results. Ergonomically designed for a palm-friendly non-slip fit. Do not use with heat.



#### Zoges Aqua Plugz Ear Plugs (from £4.30)

Ergonomically shaped to fit the outer ear for a comfortable watertight fit. Set includes one pair of earplugs and a carry case, each earplug is marked with a R (right) L (left). Reusable earplugs, simply wash in clean cold water after every use and store in case. Available in adult size or junior size (6-14 years) and made from hypo-allergenic 100 Percent silicone.

