

Gussied Up!



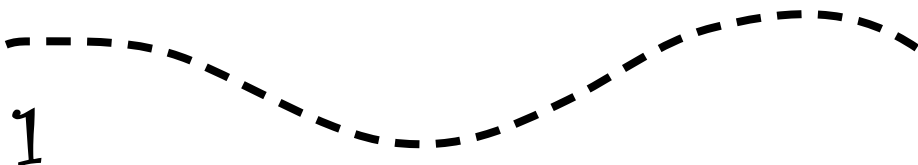
Real life self-care strategies
for your child's daily care challenges.

Produced by:
Occupational Therapy and
Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

This book is dedicated
to all the families in
Anoka-Hennepin School
District who diligently
work to support
their children.



ANOKA-HENNEPIN
SCHOOLS
A future without limit



Trimming Nails

Strategies for nail trimming:

- Massage your child's hand and compress fingertips gently before trimming nails.
- Trim nails when they are wet and soft, after a bath or shower.
- Trim nails when your child is asleep.
- When you clip, be sure to leave a little white edge rather than cutting them right up to the skin.
- Put a blanket over your child or on their lap while you're clipping.
- Use distractions such as letting your child hold a favorite object, TV or spinning a toy in one hand while you are doing the other.



**Stay positive
and reward even the
small steps!**

Hair Cutting



Strategies on getting their hair cut:

- Decrease tactile sensitivity on your child's head before a haircut by giving a deep pressure massage to the head and scalp.
- Look for a flexible and sensitive hair stylist.
- Consider cutting your child's hair at home where you can use a favorite video and not have overwhelming smells like perm chemicals.
- If your child is auditory sensitive, avoid using a buzz-cut razor or having his hair cut when someone in the barbershop is using one. Allow him/her to wear earplugs or listen to music to block out the noise.
- Use a towel and a clip rather than a plastic cape. Air blow away any bits of hair that may be on your child vs using a hair dryer.
- Bring an extra shirt along so your child can change afterward.
- With very small children, use the word trim, rather than cut to make the process seem less frightening.
- Try holding a small child on your lap or have him sit on a low chair as the big, high chair can be scary for a child.
- If possible, schedule your appointment so your child can see someone else getting their hair cut first.
- Use visual supports and social stories to increase understanding of the task. Use distractions and motivators; follow up with an enjoyable activity or treat. To find a social story, Google™ "hair cut social story".



Tooth Brushing

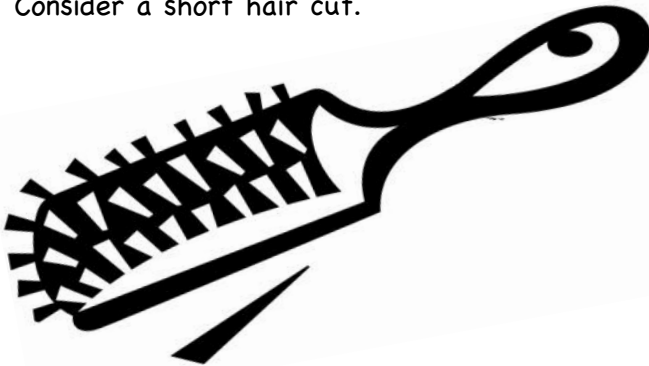
Strategies for Brushing Teeth:

- Let your child pick out his or her own soft, child-size toothbrush (Barbie or Elmo? Yellow or hot pink?).
- Develop a predictable routine for when and how to brush. For example, before or after the bedtime story. A consistent brushing pattern (i.e. starting with the top teeth or brushing front to back) will help your child motor plan this complex activity and learn to predict when he or she will feel various sensations.
- Visual supports to show the sequence of the task can be very helpful to the child.
- Model proper tooth brushing as you brush, make it fun. Talk about teeth and gums. Are they hard or soft? What are they used for?
- Kids with sensory issues may react negatively to foam in their mouth. Start out using only warm water. Use a mild flavored toothpaste or a non-fluoride toothpaste if your child hasn't yet learned to spit.
- To desensitize gums before brushing, apply pressure to the teeth and gums, using a Nuk brush, Infa-dent, or face cloth. Consult with your OT.
- Let your child chew on a damp washcloth before and after meals if he or she resists tooth brushing. You may consider using a face cloth to 'wipe' the teeth.
- Many children react very positively to vibrating toothbrushes, finding them calming, easy to use, and fun.
- It may help to stand behind your child to secure their body when they are brushing.
- Distract your children from discomfort by singing a song or making a game out of brushing.
- Brush teeth after breakfast in the morning, this will help desensitize their mouth.

Hair Brushing

Strategies for Brushing Hair:

- Prepare the scalp before hand by giving a nice head massage with firm pressure.
- Use a conditioner or detangle spray to help detangle.
- A brush with a large head may be better if your child is sensitive to touch. Use a brush with a lot of give to the bristles so you don't yank the hair.
- Sometimes if a child can sit in front of the mirror and see when the brush is coming he or she can tolerate the brushing more easily.
- Have your child brush their own hair.
- Try having your child sit in a beanbag chair for deep pressure while you're brushing.
- Having your child hug a favorite stuffed animal or use a weighted lap pad may be helpful.
- Always brush from the bottom up to avoid creating snarls with longer hair. With tangles, hold just above the tangle and then work up to the root to minimize tugging the scalp.
- Consider a short hair cut.



Online Resource:

<http://sensorysmarts.com/>

Resource:

Raising a sensory Smart Child (2005) by L. Biel, N. Peske; Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration (2004) by E. Yack, S. Sutton, P. Aquilla (A-H OT Dept. 8/08)

