



Strategies for self-care – Session 1

- Try massaging your child's face prior to tooth brushing with firm and maintained touch pressure as tolerated by the child. You could try brushing teeth during bath or shower time if they enjoy this activity.
- Before washing hair, use deep pressure massage to help desensitise the area. Start from hands to arms to shoulders to face and then to the head. This can be repeated during and after hair care.
- Before hair brushing, use deep pressure massage to help desensitise the area. Start from hands to arms to shoulders to face and then to the head.
- Use a social story, photo book or symbols to prepare for the haircut. Use proprioceptive and heavy work activities to help calm before having a haircut.
- Try using a weighted lap pad or blanket whilst having a haircut.
- Whilst playing in the bath, as above, model washing with a doll or other suitable toy and talk through the steps as you do them. Depending on the age of the child, you could sing a song such as "This is the way we wash our....."
- Use deep pressure when using a wash mitt or wash cloth and use slow strokes rather than fast ones. Tell your child where you are going to wash so they are ready for your actions.
- Allow the child to pick their own hand soap scent and give them the opportunity to decorate the container with their own touch of stickers, glitter, marker drawings, etc. Some children enjoy placing small plastic toys inside the dispenser as well.
- Allowing your child to chew or suck on something during nail cutting. Dim the lights and minimise background noise if the child is oversensitive. You can play a nail cutting song or slow, rhythmical, calming music.
- Have your child hold a vibrating toy in his/her hands prior to or during nail clipping. The vibration helps to "desensitize" the area prior to nail clipping in the hope that it isn't as bothersome. You can also "brush" each nail with a toothbrush prior to clipping each nail or try using a vibrating toothbrush (the pressure from the bristles of the brush plus the vibration can really help to desensitize