

Tips to Make Grooming Easier at Home



General Tips for Success

- **Perform “heavy work” proprioceptive activities prior to non-preferred grooming tasks to aid in calming, regulation, and participation.**
 - Wall push-ups or pushes
 - Squeezes/big bear hugs
 - Wilbarger brushing protocol
 - Joint compressions
 - Animal walks (i.e., frog jump, bear walk)
 - Carrying a heavy object across the room
- **Positively reinforce compliance with grooming tasks (i.e., reward with preferred toy after participation in morning routine tasks or in nightly bathtime).**
 - Ensure that the child knows exactly what they are being rewarded for
 - Use “First, then” language (i.e., “First trim 1 nail, then toy”)
- **Utilize a visual/picture schedule during grooming routines to prepare the child for what is to come (e.g., “iDo Hygiene” app).**
- **Model the grooming task on yourself to increase the child’s comfort with the task.**
- **Play soft, calming music or sing in a slow, rhythmic tone for calming, (e.g., “Ants Go Marching”).**
- **Allow a video or preferred toy for distraction if the task is highly aversive.**

Bath Time

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Prior

- Talk the child through what will happen prior to bathing using a calm voice
- Consider filling the bathtub with water prior to bringing the child into the bathroom, as the noise of the water rushing out of the faucet can be hyper-stimulating for some kiddos
- Consider personal preferences
- Allow the child to select a soap product that smells good to them when you are out shopping at the store.
- Allow the child to select the water temperature

During

- Provide dim lighting to create a calming environment
- Utilize a waterproof/laminated "To Do" list with simple photos depicting the steps of bathing
- Use a slow, quiet voice to aid in calming the child
- Incorporate fun toys to keep the child engaged
(i.e., wind up toys that will move through the water, favorite action figure and simulate giving him a bath)
- Offer the child the opportunity to wash his/her own hair or complete other bathing tasks independently to increase the sense of control over the situation
- Consider getting into the bath with them and modeling bathing activities on yourself
- Bring measuring cups into the bathtub so that the child can control how much water they pour on themselves. This can also be fun for filling, pouring, and stacking!
- Bring a doll into the tub for the child to wash for fun

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In General

- Use the app “iDo Hygiene,” which visually depicts the steps involved in bathing, as well as other self-care tasks.
- For some kiddos with vestibular processing challenges, filling the water to a lower level can provide an increased sense of confidence
- If tipping the head back during hair rinsing is challenging...
- Have the child wear a foam visor or plastic goggles and pour water over their head
- Encourage the child to operate the shower head him/herself
- Have the child dip his/her head forward, as this can be preferred to tipping back