



March Monthly Topic:

Haircuts

Many children find it difficult to tolerate haircuts.

With the auditory input (clippers & hairdryers), the visual input (large mirrors & styling tools), the tactile input (water drips & trimmed pieces of hair), and the smells of a salon, this environment is primed for over-stimulation.

Here are some tips to help with the next time your child gets a haircut.

- ✓ Prepare your child: Make a picture schedule of what to expect. Talk about the steps in positive terms (“Sometimes clippers are loud, but we’ll be OK.”)
- ✓ Provide lots of heavy work and deep touch pressure on the days leading up to the haircut.
- ✓ Consider giving your child a scalp massage prior to a haircut to help desensitize the scalp.
- ✓ Do you need to bring ear plugs?
- ✓ Make the haircut appointment on a day that your child does not have other highly challenging activities scheduled, and at a time when the salon is the least busy.
- ✓ Bring an extra large tee shirt or soft flannel shirt from home to use instead of the stylist’s cape.
- ✓ Bring a clean shirt to put on afterward or have your child dress in layers to remove the “itchy” layer.
- ✓ Always plan on going straight home after a haircut so your child can wash off any stray hair clippings.
- ✓ Barber shops are often less overwhelming from a sensory standpoint, as opposed to a salon.
- ✓ Ask the stylist if he/she would be willing to give your child breaks. Count back from 10 (slowly), then give a break (read a short book or let your child play for a few minutes on a handheld game). Use a timer if needed. Repeat until finished.
- ✓ Ask the stylist to concentrate on important areas first – trimming bangs or the back of the head, just in case the hair cut needs to come to an abrupt end.
- ✓ Ask the stylist to spray water onto a comb and then run it through your child’s hair, rather than spraying his head directly.
- ✓ Ask the stylist to use scissors rather than electric clippers if your child is sensitive to sound and vibration.