



Personal Care Skills



We spend a large portion of our day brushing our hair and teeth and washing our bodies. Our presentation to others is more inviting if we are clean and well groomed.

Wherever possible let your child do the task independently. It contributes to self-esteem and it is easier for the nervous system to process self-imposed touch rather than touch by another person.

General strategies

- Use visual aids to increase your child's understanding of the task (picture symbols, schedules, sequence strips).
- Use communication supports – social stories, picture symbols.
- Build in consistency and predictability to decrease stress.
- Have an organised environment; put things back in place so your child will be more independent in finding them.
- Use calming strategies specific to your child.
- Remember that deep pressure touch has a more organising effect than light touch.
- Minimise other sensory input wherever possible.
- Try using an electric toothbrush as some children find the vibration calming.
- Try cutting nails following a bath as nails are softer and use clippers instead of scissors.

The advice above is from the following sources:

Jane Horwood: Sensory Circuits: A sensory motor skills programme for children

Paula Aquilla & Ellen Yack: Building Bridges through sensory integration therapy for children with autism and other pervasive developmental disorders

Phoebe Caldwell & Jane Horwood: Using intensive interaction and sensory integration: A handbook for those who support people with severe autism