



## Hair washing and styling information sheet

Some children find that the head is particularly sensitive to touch, which can make hair washing or cutting a distressing experience.

When children are sensitive to touch they may react negatively. This is because the nervous system is interpreting the stimulus as potentially dangerous or harmful. The following strategies may support your child for hair washing:

- Try washing the hair at the beginning of bath time. If your child likes having a bath, they will learn that after their body and hair is washed they then get to play.
- Stay calm. If you're calm, then your child will be calmer too
- Large stickers on the ceiling above the bath and have your child try to find "Elmo" or the dog or whatever you put up there. Sometimes this works as a distractor!
- Keeping your child's hair short makes hair washing easier
- Try using dry shampoo between hair washes
- Have a flannel ready on the side of the bath. Tell your child it is for wiping their face whenever they need to
- Some children do not like water in their ears or eyes, try ear plugs or goggles
- Experiment with unscented shampoo
- Prepare your child for the task by using visual support for hair washing. Use a picture to represent the hair washing with a picture to represent a preferred activity such as a snack or TV. Explain to your child that first they will have their hair washed, then have their treat.
- Give your child some control by letting them have the shampoo on their hand to rub it in. Let your child hold the shower head or jug for rinsing or let your child lie in the bath then rinse their hair.
- Talk to your child about what it is they don't like about hair washing; it may be the fear of getting water in their eyes, a dislike of the feeling of wet hair, the scent of the shampoo.
- Select a shampoo which develops a lot of lather, as this will reduce the amount of effort to spread the shampoo

- Try using hair washing brushes when attempting to wash hair to help spread the shampoo..



Etac Long Handled Beauty Hair Washer

Denman D6 Shampoo/Shower Brush

### Helping children to become independent

Some children may be slower to become independent with washing their hair. The following strategies may help your child to become more independent with the task:

- Use a shampoo which comes out of a pump or soap style bar, to prevent having to squeeze shampoo out of the bottle.
- Children who have balance difficulties may find it easier to sit when learning to wash their own hair. This may mean using a shower chair or a bath stool.
- Break the task of hair washing down and encourage your child to master one step before moving on to the next.
- Use picture cards for each step and laminate and tape to the bathroom wall.

### Hair Brushing

- Try using a wide handled brush
- Consider using a detangling spray if their hair is difficult to brush
- Consider a wide toothed comb as this will reduce the resistance on hair.

### Hair Styling

- Ask your child to try leaning their elbows against a surface when brushing their hair as this will provide them with greater stability.
- Experiment with different hairstyles e.g. placing hair in bunches
- Consider letting hair air dry rather than using a hairdryer.
- Consider hair ties that are easier to manipulate



Spiral Hairband



Ribbon Hair Tie



Hair Bungee