

SENSORY CHALLENGE EDUCATIONAL SERIES FOR HOME

Strategies

TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH
SENSORY CHALLENGES



Getting
a
Hair Cut

SENSORY CHALLENGE:
COMMUNITY SKILLS

STRATEGIES TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH SENSORY CHALLENGES

SENSORY CHALLENGE: COMMUNITY SKILLS



Getting a Hair Cut

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The **Does Your Child?** Section offers educational information about characteristics of children with the above mentioned sensory/behavior challenge. Your child may present with one or many of these characteristics.
- The **Try This!** section offers simple strategies for helping your child cooperate and develop skills. Not all suggestions are appropriate for every child and family. Only use strategies that apply to your child's age, developmental level, and situation. It is suggested to use this checklist while consulting with a professional who has explained and is monitoring these strategies.

>>> Does Your Child?

- Get very upset and/or refuse to go to a barber shop/hair stylist.
- Only tolerate a very brief visit to the hair stylist.

>>> Try This!

- Schedule the appointment when it is unlikely that he/she will be tired or hungry.
- Ask for a time that is usually "slow" and less hectic.
- Call in advance to make sure the stylist is on time to reduce his/her anxiety while waiting.
- If you think your child's behavior may be disruptive, consider sharing with the stylist some information about your child's Sensory/Behavior challenges before the appointment. The stylist may have ideas to help the situation.
- If it is his/her first haircut, a "practice visit" may be necessary. Take your child to see, smell, and listen to what a barber/hair salon is all about. Perhaps you can make arrangements for a brief "tour" before the actual hair trimming.
- Consider asking the stylist to use a regular chair. He/she may not tolerate the height, or the fact that the chair moves up/down.
- Reduce the length of the visit by eliminating the hair wash or another step (ex: blow dry).
- Consider having the child face away from the mirror. Perhaps the sight of the scissors or clippers is upsetting to him.
- Provide distraction during the haircut. This could include a snack, drink, book, or music.
- Days prior to the haircut de-sensitize his/her scalp by providing deep pressure or massage.
- To de-sensitize your child to the process and materials that will be used, allow him/her to use scissors to trim the hair of an inexpensive doll (ex: from a yard sale).
- Consider a very short haircut to reduce the frequency of haircuts, or allow child to grow hair longer.
- Avoid using the word "cut". Use the word "trim" instead. He may have a negative reaction to that word because he may associate it with pain.
- Bring a clean shirt to wear after the hair cut. This will keep your child from being exposed to the tiny hair that is on the collar and usually is very itchy.
- If visits to the hairstylists/barber are just too stressful, you may want to provide hair trimming at home.