
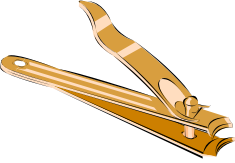


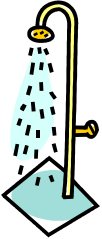
# Top Tips for Sensitivity

Below is a list of strategies which have been found to be beneficial for children. Choose the ones that you believe would best suit your child.


Personal Care	Hair cutting, combing and washing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seat the child firmly on your lap and squeeze the child firmly with your arms.</li> <li>• If child is able ask them to apply deep pressure to their head/shoulders/arms prior to task (use hand over hand assistance if required)</li> <li>• Use a firm stroke or pressure as you comb or wash your child's hair.</li> <li>• Count or have the child count as you comb, wash, rinse or cut the hair.</li> <li>• Give definite time limits to the task e.g. "Let's count to 10, and then we will stop cutting your hair". Provide deep pressure immediately after (see above).</li> <li>• Break the task into small steps and eliminate any unnecessary steps or stages.</li> <li>• Some hairdressers offer child friendly environment and bookable slots when the salon is quieter. Mobile hairdressers can also offer home appointments.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideally this should be done after a bath when nails are soft e.g. after a bath or water play.</li> <li>• Use scissors or nail clippers.</li> <li>• Do activities that provide deep touch input, for example, resting your hands on your child's shoulders and applying moderate pressure which gives your child the calming sensation of deep pressure prior to their nails being cut.</li> <li>• Prior to cutting apply deep pressure to child's hands and feet or allow child to manipulate/squeeze a toy.</li> <li>• Try massaging your child's hand with a safe oil such as coconut oil</li> </ul>


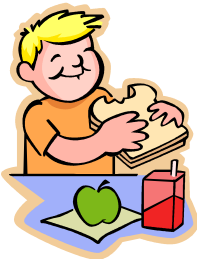
	<p>prior to cutting their nails. This will also soften their nails.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try wrapping your child's body firmly in a warm towel (leaving their hands free) whilst cutting their nails.</li> <li>• Give definite time limits to the task.</li> </ul>
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<b>Washing</b>	<b>Child hates baths or showers</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before bath time, do activities that provide deep touch input, for example, resting your hands on your child's shoulders and applying moderate pressure.</li> <li>• Have the bath water ready before having the child undress. Make the transition from undressing and getting into the bath as quick and smooth as possible.</li> <li>• If the child dislikes having his face or body washed, encourage him to wash himself.</li> <li>• Use a large sponge or Loofah sponge. Rub firmly to decrease defensiveness.</li> <li>• Use fragrance free soap made for sensitive skin.</li> <li>• If the child is showering, use a hand held shower nozzle. Let the child control the direction and force of the water.</li> <li>• Use a large towel, and quickly and firmly wrap the child in it.</li> <li>• Provide deep-touch using a towel to the extremities, hands and feet to decrease defensiveness. If the child will tolerate it, provide a firm massage, using lotion to avoid skin irritation.</li> </ul>
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<b>Tooth brushing</b>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tactile brushing on cheeks, lips and tongue before moving onto inside of mouth.</li> <li>• Use of fidget toys whilst brushing teeth.</li> <li>• Try using sugar free gum.</li> <li>• Social stories.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing task to music he/she likes or distracted by tv.</li> <li>• Follow with a reward.</li> <li>• Try a curved toothbrush – available from “Fledglings” website</li> <li>• Consider use of electric toothbrush</li> </ul>
<b>Dressing</b>	<b>Child dislikes certain clothing</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn socks inside out so seam is on outside/try seamless socks.</li> <li>• Wash new clothing to take out the stiffness.</li> <li>• Try using detergent for sensitive skin (natural detergents may be preferable to ones with chemicals).</li> <li>• Have the child help to select clothing.</li> <li>• Remove tags until child's system can tolerate them.</li> <li>• The following website has a range of sensory clothing available e.g. no labels, easy fastenings, seamless garments:  <a href="https://fledglings.org.uk/">https://fledglings.org.uk/</a>  (Some high street retails also provide easy clothing range).</li> </ul>
<b>Eating and Drinking/ taste</b>	<b>Child is a picky eater</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not introduce new foods or challenges at meal times. Try to make mealtimes a relaxed pleasurable experience.</li> <li>• Introduce new foods by expanding one sensory characteristic at a time. For example, if your child eats yoghurt introduce cornflakes, oat-flakes or grape nuts into the yoghurt to produce texture.</li> <li>• Use a plate with compartments for food, or try to space foods to allow for consistency.</li> <li>• For further information refer to Restricted diet booklet</li> </ul>

**Noise**






- Limit unnecessary noise in the environment.
  - Use rugs or carpet in the area to minimise extraneous noise.
  - Prepare the child for sudden noise by telling them when this will happen.
  - Avoid special events such as firework displays, whenever possible, until the child's sensory system can accommodate them.
  - Have the child wear snug clothing.
  - Vacuum when the child is not around.
- \*see noise sensitivity handout

**Tactile/Touch**      **Child Reacts negatively when touched by others**



- Teach others to touch/show affection to the child firmly and directly.
- Explain to others i.e. family and friends that the child feels light touch more strongly and may perceive it to be painful.
- Give firm hugs rather than kisses. Take turns hugging. Have the child hug first, and then return the hug. Determine who gives the best hugs.
- Teach people always to approach the child from the front and always make sure the child is able to anticipate the hug or expression of affection.
- Child uses only their fingertips, for example when playing with toys, crayons, pencils etc
- Use tools to manipulate the materials whenever possible (for example, a paintbrush rather than finger paint).
- Gradually introduce messy activities if the child can tolerate this.
- Use messy materials that provide resistance, such as putties or dough mixtures.

Body Awareness (Proprioception)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before activities, provide deep pressure into the palms of the hands, such as firm clapping, chair push-ups, wall push-ups.</li> <li>• Progress to sustained deep pressure into the palms through resistive or weight bearing activities.</li> <li>• Grade activities by using the fingertips then moving to using the whole hand. If the child will tolerate it, provide deep-touch input over the hand and writing tool, i.e. hand-over-hand squeezing.</li> <li>• Provide deep pressure into the bottom of the feet. Seat the child firmly on your lap facing a wall. Place the child's feet flat against the wall and put pressure directly through the knees into the feet. Have the child help push.</li> </ul>
Smell	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid wearing strong scented perfumes/aftershaves</li> <li>• Reduce use of air fresheners</li> <li>• Have a favourite smell on a hanky</li> <li>• Have a selection of different scents – Ask the child to identify the one they like e.g. empty jar of moisturiser</li> <li>• Aromatherapy roller balls e.g. Lavender</li> </ul>
Balance (Vestibular)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linear movement e.g. rocking, rhythmical swinging (calming)</li> <li>• Rotary movement e.g. spinning, change position of head activities, change speed of movement activities (alerting)</li> </ul>