

## Hair cutting

### Things to try for parents and carers

#### Getting Ready

- **Stay Calm:** Do something relaxing before and after the haircut, like listening to music or cuddling.
- Use some of our calming and regulating activities on our other advice sheets
- **Watch First:** See someone else get their haircut, like a sibling or a video.
- **Pretend Play:** Use a doll to play “hairdresser” at home.
- **Practice with Scissors:** Try safe scissor activities (like cutting paper) to get used to how they work.
- **Explain the Plan:** Tell your child where you’re going, who will cut their hair, and how long it will take.
- Wearing a tight hat or having a firm but gentle head massage beforehand may reduce sensitivity.

#### During the Haircut

- **Head Massage:** Give a gentle, firm head rub or let them wear a snug hat before the haircut.
- **Practice First:** Tug gently on their hair without scissors so they get used to the feeling.
- **Time Limits:** Use a timer (like a phone buzzer) to show when the haircut will end.

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- **Talk Through It:** Ask the hairdresser to explain what they're doing in simple words.
- **Noise Help:** If clippers are too loud, try scissors instead. Use headphones or play calming music.
- **Mirror Choices:** Let them watch in the mirror or turn away if the mirror feels too much.
- **Stay Close:** Let them sit on your lap for a hug if it helps.
- **Avoid light touch;** use firm but gentle sustained touch during contact, including the shampoo stage.

## Other Tips

- **Distract Them:** Bring a tablet, music, or a favourite toy to keep them calm.
- **Firm Touch:** Use gentle but firm touch during washing and cutting—light touch might tickle or irritate.
- **Avoid Itchy Hair:** Bring extra clothes to change into after the haircut so they don't feel itchy.
- **Shampoo Smells:** Bring a shampoo they like from home or use unscented ones.
- **Skip Washing:** If washing is too much, try a dry cut or wet their hair at home first.
- **At Home:** If hair salons feel overwhelming, ask a mobile hairdresser to come to your house.

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Scan the QR Code to watch our video support for children and young people with sensory processing differences



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