Sensory Strategies – Grooming

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.

Whenever possible, let your child complete the task independently. It contributes to

self-esteem, and it is easier for the nervous system to process self-imposed

touch than touch by another person. If one person is successful in assisting

your child with grooming, pay attention to how they do it, what kind of touch they use what they say how close to the child they stand, etc. Others can

imitate that style and grooming can be more successful.

General Strategies for Self-Care Skills:

* Use visual aids to increase your child’s understanding of the task (e.g. picture symbols, schedules, sequence strips).
* Using a simple visual schedule with laminated cartoon pictures of the areas of the face and body they need to wash, and the stages they need to go through. Encourage them to follow the schedule and prompt them to find out where they need to wash next by looking at the schedule rather than just verbally telling them.

Pictures that can be used in visual schedules can be downloaded from websites such as:

* + <https://www.twinkl.ca/resources/parents/wellbeing-parents/parents-home-routine-and-timetable>
  + <https://do2learn.com/picturecards/printcards/>
* Use communication supports (e.g. 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.
* Have a basket to keep all of their toiletries together with their schedule on the front of this basket to help them to concentrate and organise themselves.
* Use calming strategies that are specific to your child.
* Remember that pressure touch has a more organizing effect than light touch.
* Minimise sensory input whenever possible
* A mirror that does not steam up will allow your child to see themselves whilst washing so that they can see the lather and cover the whole face; and also so that he knows when they have cleaned off all of the soap.
* Whilst your child is developing this skill the use of mild soap that does not sting their eyes is recommended so that they can have their eyes open to see what they are doing.

Ideas for Self Help Skills – for children with Sensory Issues

Adapted from ‘Building Bridges through Sensory Integration’ by Ellen Youch,

Paula Aquilla & Shirley Sutten