

Children with Disabilities Service



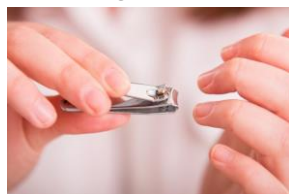
Advice for nail and hair cutting

Nail and hair cutting can sometimes feel painful, uncomfortable or distressing for a child – making it stressful for both them and their parent/carer. Try to make the situation fun by using pretend play, singing songs and rewards. Below are some suggestions for you to try.

Nail Cutting



- Try different tools to find out what works best e.g. nail scissors, nail clippers or a nail file
- Let your child hold a favourite toy or teddy
- Massage hands and compress fingers (firm squeeze onto tip of finger)
- Try trimming nails when they are wet/soft after a bath or shower
- Use distraction – if your child becomes absorbed while watching a favourite programme, trim nails whilst they are watching
- Some parents/carers wait until their child is asleep to cut their nails
- Use a motivator or reward such as a favourite toy once cutting is complete e.g. “*First cut nails, Then toy*”
- Allow control – older children could be taught how to cut their own nails.



Hair Cutting



- Firm gentle pressure is calming. Try wrapping your child up snugly in a towel whilst cutting their hair.
- Try to give a deep pressure massage on your child's head prior to cutting hair.
- Try placing your hands on top of the child's head (if not tolerated, try putting his/her hands on first then yours on top), push down onto head firmly but gently – this should help provide some calming “deep pressure” prior to hair cutting.
- A mirror can be useful – your child will be able to see what is happening.
- Let your child use a weighted lap pad during activity (if they tolerate this). You can make your own with a pillow case or hot water bottle filled with sand or dry lentils (there are various sites online with instructions). Some children like to sit on their hands whilst having their hair cut.
- Give your child a hairdryer on cool setting or a brush to wipe away stray hairs – this helps to give child some control on situation.
- Using headphones/earplugs to block out noise of clippers or dryer might be helpful.

Children with Disabilities Service

Community Teams

Roe Centre

Knockbraken Healthcare Park

Saintfield Road

Belfast

BT8 8BH

Telephone: 028 9504 2725

