

10 TIPS FOR GETTING THROUGH A HAIRCUT

1

Find an understanding hairdresser.

Whether having your child's hair cut at home or at a barbers or salon, talk to the hairdresser beforehand about your child, their condition and how they may react. You may want to provide them with some information and give them some tips and suggestions on how to handle certain situations (for example speaking calmly and using short simple sentences).

2

Introduce your child gradually.

Visit the salon and watch someone they know (a sibling, friend or Dad) having a haircut

3

Prepare your child.

Mark it on the calendar with a haircut symbol so they know when it is coming. Try to visit at a quiet time of day when you are unlikely to have to wait too long – or book an appointment explaining to the hairdresser that missing the allotted time could have consequences!

4

Use a timer.

Set it at the start of the cut so your child knows how long it is going to last.

5

Use social stories.

They can explain haircuts and will prepare them for the visit to the hairdresser.

6

Use scissors only or earplugs.

Many children with autism are very sensitive to the noise of clippers. Either ask the hairdresser to use scissors only and/or use earplugs to block out some of the noise. You could also play child's favorite music or stories to distract them and block out some of the background noise.

7

Bring fidget toys.

They may also be useful to keep your child occupied during the haircut – a favorite toy may also provide some comfort and keep them distracted.

8

Include a lap pad or weighted vest.

These could be used to keep them calm and reduce anxiety while in the chair.

9

Don't use strongly-scented shampoo.

If your child is having their hair washed, ask the hairdresser not to use a strongly scented shampoo – taking your own shampoo which will smell familiar to your child maybe be better.

10

Bring a reward.

A small reward like a lollipop at the end of the haircut works wonders and can be used as an incentive for the next visit.

