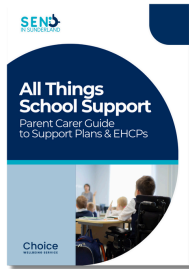
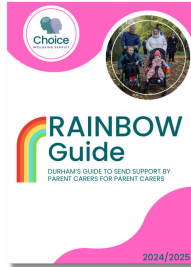
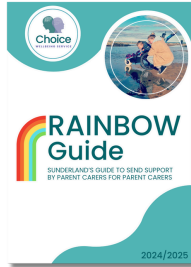


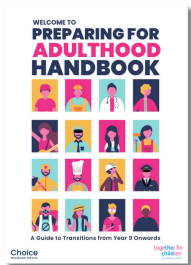
Here are just a few more guides we have available!



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Parent Carer Guide to Brushing Hair

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Because one size doesn't fit all

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Hair brushing and detangling can be a major struggle for children with conditions such as sensory issues, Autism, Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), or other SEN.

When time is of the essence, this simple task can quickly escalate into frustration, anxiety, and meltdowns - impacting parents as much as their children. It's not uncommon for children to hide or react with screams at the very sight of a hairbrush, making the actual process incredibly challenging.

Why do they not like their hair brushing?

- **Sensory Sensitivity:** Children with conditions like Autism or SPD can have heightened sensory perceptions. What feels like a normal brush stroke to one person might feel like scratching, poking, or intense pulling to them. The static electricity, the sound of the bristles, or even the smell of hair products can also be distressing.
- **Tactile Defensiveness:** This is a strong negative reaction to touch. They might actively resist or withdraw from being touched, especially on their head or scalp, which is a very sensitive area.
- **Lack of Control:** The act of someone else brushing their hair means they have little to no control over the sensation or duration. This lack of autonomy can be a significant trigger for anxiety and frustration, especially for children with PDA who resist demands.
- **Pain from Tangling:** If their hair is often tangled, brushing can be genuinely painful, leading to an association of the brush with discomfort.
- **Anxiety and Frustration:** The anticipation of brushing can cause significant anxiety. When combined with the pressure of needing to be somewhere on time, this can quickly escalate into frustration and meltdowns for both the child and the parent.
- **Predictability and Routine:** Changes in routine or unexpected brushing can be unsettling for children who thrive on predictability.
- **Past Negative Experiences:** A few painful or highly stressful brushing experiences can create a strong negative association, leading to hiding or screaming at the mere sight of a hairbrush.



Top Tips

- **Grab a good detangling brush** - the ones that fit in your hand, traditional ones, or even wide-toothed combs work. The goal is maximum detangling with the least amount of touching the head. A quality detangling brush combined with a detangle spray or hair oil, can make a huge difference for kids who are sensitive. These sprays or oils help get brushes and combs through knots, whether hair is wet or dry.
- **Let your child be part of the process.** Let them pick their own detangling brush, spray, or conditioner based on their favourite colours, smells, and textures. Having a few options available can really help, especially if they struggle with demand avoidance.
- **Try turning hair brushing into a game.** For kids who can't sit still, you could do a couple of brushes, then a quick run or five jumping jacks, repeating until finished. Also, consider sensory activities beforehand to help your child feel calmer.
- **Pick a calm time** when your child is relaxed in a quiet, familiar place. Make sure they're comfy, perhaps on a favourite chair. If they're okay with it, brushing in front of a mirror can help them feel in control. Using visual aids like a timer, a brush stroke counter, or a favourite song can help them understand how long it will take.
- **To untangle hair** always start at the ends and gently work your way up to the roots, holding the hair to avoid pulling. Be patient and gentle, and take breaks if your child gets uncomfortable.
- **For washing hair,** try using deep pressure when shampooing, as some children find this more tolerable. Use a visual aid to show how many rinses or how long the shower will be. Also, encourage your child to wash their own hair to give them more control and ease their anxiety.

For more information on brushing hair, follow this QR code here:

