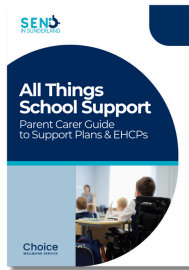
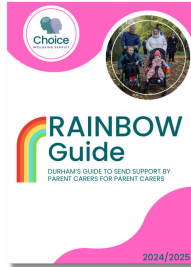
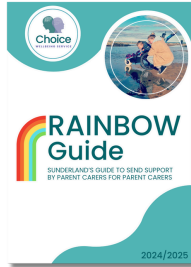


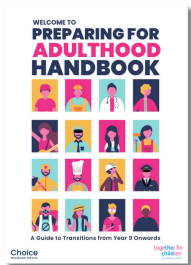
Here are just a few more guides we have available!



Guides on specific subjects



Rainbow Guides



Transitions Guides

# Personal Care

## Parent Carer Guide to Trimming Nails

# Your Child, Your Choice

Because one size doesn't fit all

Find our website here:



Cutting the nails of a child with additional needs can be challenging for several reasons. Many children experience sensory sensitivities, where the feeling of the clippers, the pressure, or even the sound can be overwhelming or genuinely painful. This can lead to tactile defensiveness, causing them to withdraw or resist touch on sensitive areas like their hands or feet. Additionally, a lack of control over the process can trigger significant anxiety, especially for children who struggle with demands or changes in routine. Past negative experiences with nail cutting can also create a strong aversion, leading to distress at the mere sight of the clippers.

### Here are some tips to make the process easier and less stressful for everyone involved:

#### Choose the Right Time and Environment:

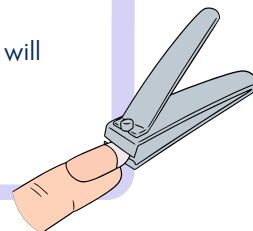
- **Timing is Key:** Pick a moment when your child is calm, well-rested, and not overstimulated. Avoid times when they are hungry, tired, or already stressed.
- **Calm Space:** Find a quiet, familiar, and comfortable place where there are minimal distractions.

#### Preparation is Crucial:

- **Gather Tools:** Have everything ready beforehand: nail clippers (small, sharp ones are often best), an emery board/nail file, and a towel or blanket for comfort.
- **Warm Water (Optional):** A short soak in warm water can soften nails and make them easier to cut, and some children find it calming.
- **Communicate & Explain:** Use simple language or visual supports (like a social story, picture schedule, or "first/then" board) to explain what will happen. For example, "First, we cut two nails, then we play with Lego."

#### Allow for Control and Predictability:

- **Visual Timer:** Use a visual timer to show how long the session will last or how many nails you'll cut.



- **Offer Choice:** Let your child choose which finger or toe to start with, or which clipper to use (if you have options). This gives them a sense of control.
- **Break It Down:** Don't try to do all nails at once. Cut one or two, take a break, and then return. Over time, you might build up to more.
- **Mirror (If Tolerated):** For some children, watching in a mirror can help them predict the movement and feel more in control.

#### During the Process:

- **Comfortable Position:** Find a position where both you and your child are comfortable. This might be sitting face-to-face, sitting side-by-side, or even in a beanbag.
- **Deep Pressure/Massage:** Before cutting, gently massage the hand or foot with deep, firm pressure. This can help desensitise the area for some children.
- **Distraction/Engagement:** Use a preferred toy, a favorite song, a video, or engage them in a conversation to distract them.
- **Gentle and Quick:** Make quick, precise cuts. Avoid pulling or tugging the skin.
- **File Instead of Clip:** If clipping is too distressing, try filing the nails down gradually with an emery board. This takes longer but might be more tolerable.
- **"Only one" fingers:** If touch is an issue, try focusing on just one or two fingers/toes each day rather than all at once.

#### Positive Reinforcement:

- **Praise and Reward:** Offer immediate praise and a small, preferred reward (e.g., sticker, small treat, favourite activity) immediately after each successful cut or session.
- **Keep it Positive:** Even if it's challenging, try to stay calm and positive to avoid transferring your stress to the child.

For more information on nail trimming, follow this QR code here:

