

Autism

spectrum disorders

information

about

HAIRCUTS



Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo



The Children's Guild
FOUNDATION

From the sound of scissors to the touch of a child's hair, the sensory challenges with haircuts can sometimes be overwhelming for children on the spectrum. We have found some tips and resources to help prepare a child for a haircut and also some local salons and stylists who are experienced with cutting hair for children with special needs.

Please understand that the recommendation of services is provided solely by parents and the listing of services is done as a courtesy and does not imply approval or endorsement by Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo. If you would like to add a provider or tip to the list, please contact: jmertz@kaleidahealth.org.

RECOMMENDED STYLISTS AND SALONS

The Hair Dude – aka Craig Connock (716) 316-HAIR (4247)

The Hair Dude is the parent of a child with an autism spectrum disorder. He will come to your house to cut your child's hair and is used to working with people with special needs. While he is there, he can also cut the hair for other family members.

Kids Cuts R Fun - two locations

2782 Sheridan Dr. (716) 838-0300
Tonawanda, NY 14150

8591 Main St, (716) 631-3894
Williamsville, NY 14221

Kids Cuts R Fun has animals the child can sit on while the child's hair is cut. The salon has televisions in front of the cutting chairs and a library of children's videos so children can watch videos as their hair is cut. Please call for hours and/or appointment.

Ann Marie Borgisi – The Salon at The Commons (716) 871-0757

Wynwood of Kenmore
2971 Delaware Ave.
Kenmore, NY 14217

Grandmother of a child with an ASD. Please call Ann Marie – preferably between 11:30 am and 1:30 pm. If your child can tolerate it, she will book a quiet appointment in her salon. You and child are welcome to visit salon in advance of the appointment. If your child cannot tolerate salon, she is willing to go to your home.

Some local schools may offer haircut days, it can't hurt to ask.

Please refer to other side of sheet for TIPS

Haircut Tips

Autism Speaks has a nice link, resource (attached) and video to help with haircuts:

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/tips-successful-haircuts>

Prepare in advance

- Read Autism Speaks haircut toolkit
- Make a social story about getting a haircut.
- Visit salon in advance of appointment
- Practice at home put towel on child, comb hair and pretend to cut (observe which is most challenging part)
- Try earplugs or headphones
- Schedule haircut when salon is relatively quiet
- Schedule haircut at time when child is least likely to be tired, overwhelmed or stressed
- If child does not like washing hair, wash the child's hair before going to salon and/or ask for a "dry" cut.
- Plan a reward for after cut

What to bring

- Bring headphones or earplugs (if tolerated) to muffle sound of scissors
- DVD player/iPad with a child's favorite movie to distract the child.
- Music if the child prefers music
- Fidget toy to occupy hands.
- Reward for after cut
- Consider bringing a timer, watch or phone with app - so child can see when it will be over (end in sight)

At salon

- Ask stylist to minimize small talk
- Calm the child before the haircut – rub child's arm or head (if child likes it) to relax and prepare child.
- If child will tolerate a head massage, this may help to desensitize their scalp before the haircut (often a firmer touch is less uncomfortable than light touch for someone with tactile sensitivity).
- Set a timer or watch to show how long the experience will last – often just knowing when something will finish makes it more bearable. If a timer or watch isn't understood by the person, consider playing music or DVD or other activity that lasts the right amount of time – when it is finished the haircut will be over.
- Reassure your child during the haircut. Explain each step of the way in a slow and steady voice. Praise the child. For example, "Good job keeping your head still." "All done, right after..." Let your child know that there is an end in sight.
- Reward child for completing haircut.
- Observe your child while cutting his hair. If there is anything child particularly dislikes, try to fix it and/or take it into consideration for next time.
- Once the haircut is done, admire your child's clean-cut appearance. "You look handsome!" Show him how he looks in the mirror, if tolerated. Take before and after photos so they can see the benefits of getting a haircut.
- Be really patient and try to keep it positive! Take long, deep breaths.