

Showering and bathing

Top tips for children

- Many children need ongoing adult prompting to maintain their routine.
- Help your child to come up with a plan that works for them – how can they complete this task? What will help them remember? What comes next?
- Break the task down in to small steps. Encourage your child to join in with very small parts of the routine: gradually increase how much they do.
- Use 'chaining' (see our introduction to getting dressed leaflet) – if they struggle to start the task, you start things off and encourage them to do the final step. This also works if your child can start the task but struggles to complete all the steps – you take over.
- Use a reward chart to record and praise their achievements at each step.



Lots of ideas are given below. Try different things to see what works for your child. Our 'Daily Living Skills - top tips for parents and carers' sheet may also be useful when thinking about the best approach.

Where do I start?

Environment/preparation

- Allow extra time. Think about what your child is doing before and after the activity, prepare them for a change of activity and what will happen afterwards – this can be motivating.
- What do you need now? (towel, clean clothes, toiletries).
- Can your child choose their own shower gel, soap, shampoo? (this can be motivating)
- What do you need afterwards? (e.g. towel, deodorant, comb).
- Can your child get into the bath safely, can they sit comfortably and in a well-supported position?
- Consider using a step to help your child get in and out of the bath more easily.



- Consider a baby or toddler bath seat if your child is pre-school age.



- If your child is older and is not able to sit safely and independently in the bath, please consider whether an Occupational Therapy (OT) assessment would be useful for your child. You can find more information about how to refer to OT on our website www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/cot



Washing

- Use a set routine - it is easier to remember what comes next, e.g. wash the upper body, then lower body, or name body parts.
- Work from the top of your body downwards (or vice versa) each time - this acts as a memory prompt to wash everywhere.
- Use visual prompts to remind you and your child of the different tasks and the order
- Use a sponge, flannel or shower scrunchie – this makes it easier to lather and spread the shower gel or soap.
- Check! Does your child think they are clean? Have they washed and lathered everywhere? Have they rinsed well?

Hair washing

- What steps are needed? Try to keep techniques used consistent:

Wetting hair

- how long for?
- could you use a timer?
- do you need a jug to pour water on?



Getting the shampoo ready

- how much do you use?
- could you use a measuring cup or spoon?
- how big should the blob of shampoo be?

Lathering shampoo

- how long for?
- can the shampoo be applied in smaller blobs in different places (front and back),
- what kind of hand movements are needed to lather?
- could you start at the front and work backwards, or vice versa?

- can you use hand-over-hand to guide the movements?

Rinsing

- how can your hands help?
- how to rinse? Jug/shower?
- how long for?
- how to check hair is clean?

If your child does not like getting water in their face, remind them to:

- tip their head back
- close their eyes
- try a shower visor/ shampoo guard



Drying

- Use a set drying routine, do things in the same order each time.
- Use hand-over-hand to demonstrate drying technique.
- Drying is often easier when sitting, for extra stability.
- Use a smaller towel (e.g. hand towel) which is easier to hold and handle. Children can struggle to use bath sheets well.
- Wearing a towelling dressing gown is a great way to get dried.
- Encourage your child to think about how they know when they are properly dried.



What comes next?

Comb hair/get dressed etc. See our other leaflets for help with different tasks.

Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment please let us know by speaking to a member of our staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information to improve and develop our services.

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Experience Team** on **0113 220 8585**, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm or email lch.pet@nhs.net

We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.

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