 **Children’s Community Occupational Therapy**

**Self Care Skills – Sensory**

**Teeth Cleaning:**

* Apply deep pressure to cheeks with both hands on cheeks before teeth cleaning – blow up cheeks and squash flat
* Play tongue games before brushing – e.g. count teeth on left side with tongue, put tongue in cheek etc
* Use minimal toothpaste, bicarbonate based – helps stop gagging
* Use an electrical toothbrush – provides deep pressure and vibration to help calm and organise
* General blowing a sucking games during the day – blowing bubbles, party poppers, drinking through a straw

**Toileting:**

* Use moist toilet roll / wipes
* Keep visual and auditory stimulation to a minimum
* Toilet seat – might be too hard, use a padded child toilet seat

**Dislike of baths / showers:**

* Do resistive (pushing, pulling, carrying, rolling) activities before to provide deep pressure
* Encourage child to wash own body / face
* Use large sponge and rub firmly
* Fragrance free soap
* Use hand held shower head – increased control
* Use large towel to wrap and firmly dry afterwards – pat firmly or leave to dry
* Deep massage when putting on cream
* Run bath before child enters the room to reduce the anxiety build up

**Hair Washing / Cutting:**

* Sit child firmly on lap, squeeze child between your knees
* Place hands on head, apply gently but firm downward pressure – wear a tight hat prior to help desensitise
* Counting whilst doing the task
* Get child to scoop and pour water
* Fold flannel over eyes to prevent soap getting into eyes
* Tip head back to pour water over
* Firm touch when massaging shampoo
* Use a soft hair brush
* Hold top of hair whilst brushing out tangles

**Sleeping:**

* Provide firm deep pressure massage prior to bed, avoid tummy area
* Establish good routine, calming bath – dry with firm rubs of the towel, story
* Tuck the blankets / sheets into the mattress to help provide deep pressure in the night
* Add extra weight – more blankets, wheat bags onto the legs on top of the blankets to provide further deep pressure
* Sleep in a sleeping bag – gives sense of security
* Have extra pillows between legs or arms to help cuddle into
* Use of a night light