

Sample Nail Clipping Desensitization Action Plan:

- Start nail clipping desensitization where child can be successful and where we avoid escalated responses “no, no, no”
- Avoid interrupting child’s preferred routines or play patterns unless they are calm moments when she/he is seated and relaxed
- Keep the clippers out where child can see them on a daily basis
- Work systematically up in small steps within child’s daily routine or during a calm time of day; identify the best time (eg. right before bath? During sensory play?) It is best if you can do the current step at least once per day and ensure that he or she is calm.
- If needed, reward calm response to current step with praise or a tangible reward (could be a small candy or a fun activity such as music video or iPad time)
- Move on to next step when you feel like child is comfortable and confident with current step. If she/he cannot move forward to the next step without distress, back up to previous step.
- Tell child what is happening with each step so she/he does not have to feel anxious (eg. “I’m going to put the nail clippers beside you for a bit).

Sample Steps:

- 1) Child will tolerate the clippers in his personal space (ie. sitting near by)
- 2) Child will tolerate touching or playing with the clippers
- 3) Child will tolerate an adult touching or playing with the clippers
- 4) Child will tolerate an adult clipping their own nails
- 5) Child will tolerate an adult touching his shoulder with the clippers
- 6) Child will tolerate an adult touching his bicep with the clippers
- 7) Child will tolerate an adult touching his forearm with the clippers
- 8) Child will tolerate an adult touching his wrist with the clippers
- 9) Child will tolerate an adult touching his hand with the clippers
- 10) Child will tolerate an adult touching the base of his fingers with the clippers
- 11) Child will tolerate an adult touching the tips of his fingers with the clippers
- 12) Child will tolerate an adult opening and closing clippers in front of his finger
- 13) Child will tolerate an adult opening and closing clippers on his nail but not clipping
- 14) Child will tolerate an adult clipping one nail
- 15) Child will tolerate an adult clipping one nail and opening and closing clippers on a second nail but not clipping
- 16) Continue this pattern!