

Pro Tips: Managing Your Child's Haircut



Does your child dread going to the hair salon or barber-shop? Between the loud noises and touch overload, getting a haircut can be very stressful for many children and families. This is especially true for individuals with autism or other developmental disabilities, since haircuts can easily trigger a meltdown.

To help prepare for your next visit, we've compiled three tips to get through your child's haircut with ease.

Tip 1: Start Young!

If possible, start taking your child for a haircut at a young age. The earlier your child starts going to the barbershop or salon, the more accustomed they will be to the routine. Going to the same location every time with the same hairdresser may also help. Your child will adjust to the familiar environment and you will be in and out of your hair appointments in record time. If your child is older, don't fret - keep reading for more tips!

Tip 2: Prepare, Prepare, Prepare!

Don't start haircuts right away. Some advance preparation goes a long way! Try taking your child to the salon or barbershop ahead of time to watch others get a haircut. If you can't make it to the salon, there are plenty of videos on the internet for them to watch on their own devices. This will help familiarize them with the sounds and environment.

As you might guess, haircuts are sensory overload. Be aware of any triggers that might hinder your child's haircut experience. The most common are: the feeling of the cape around their neck, getting their hair wet, the sounds of buzzers and hairdryers, and the feeling of a comb running through their hair. Talk to the hair professional ahead of time to explain your situation. There are several hairdressers in the area with experience with children with ASD. Some might even agree to cut your child's hair at your home, which could reduce environmental stressors.

Tip 3: Remain CALM!

Perhaps the most important thing you can do for your child is to remain calm. Without realizing, your stress could greatly contribute to your child's stress. Bring along a favorite treat as positive reinforcement to reward your child's good behavior (think: their favorite candy, toy, etc.)!

It's also helpful to provide a distraction during the haircut. Bring a a phone or tablet so your child can focus attention on getting to the next level in their game or watching a video, and you'll get through the haircut easily!

If you follow these tips, your kid will be rocking a great new hairdo in no time! For more Autism Resources and Pro Tips, visit our website at www.TheSummitCenter.org.

This article was compiled with information provided by Amy Armstrong, MS. Ed., BCBA, Curriculum Consultant, at The Summit Center.

In This Issue:

Pro Tips: Managing Haircut

WNED-TV's Kid Fest

Everything You Need to Know for 2020 Autism Walk

Learning to Play Piano

Free Parent Training

The Summit Center
150 Stahl Road | Getzville, NY
14068

www.TheSummitCenter.org

716.629.3400

The Summit Center sponsors WNED-TV's Kid Fest

Sensory Night gives children with autism or physical and sensory challenges the opportunity to enjoy a supportive, quieter, and less-crowded environment. A quiet room will be available.

Stop by Summit's table to have fun with PlayDoh and take some home! Also, enjoy character meet-and-greets, kids' activities, and lots of family fun at the WNED-TV studios. Click here to get your tickets and use password "sensorynight" to access the page. For more information on Kid Fest and tickets, visit www.wned.org. Free parking is provided.



WNED
Kid Fest
Sensory Night

Presented by
explore
& more
THE RALPH C. WILSON, JR.
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



Feb. 7, 2020

6 pm - 8 pm

WNED studios





Everything You Need to Know for the Autism Walk!

Registration for the 2020 Autism Walk is Now Open!

Join us in Making Lives Better, One Step at a Time on Saturday, April 25! The Summit Center's Autism Walk is a community event to raise funds in support of The Summit Center. Participants enjoy a four-mile or half-mile family-friendly walk filled with festivities and fun. As The Summit Center's largest fundraiser, these important dollars raised by walkers and community partners directly benefit the 1,350 children and adults served by Summit.



How to Register:

New this year! It is free to register for the 2020 Autism Walk (a \$10 fundraising minimum is required. No fundraising requirement for children under 18). Registration closes Monday, April 20. At www.SummitWalk.org, select the "Register" button on the homepage and complete the registration form, which will guide you through the registration process. If you are a returning walker from the 2019 Autism Walk, login with your username and password from last year. Some of your information will auto-populate when you complete the registration form.

The Summit Center's 2020 Autism Walk

Saturday, April 25, 2020 (Check-in at 8 a.m. | Opening Ceremony at 10 a.m.)

The Summit Center (150 Stahl Road, Getzville, NY 14068)

Register today at www.SummitWalk.org!



Why I Walk: Nick Rockwell, Summit Staff

"As someone who has worked at The Summit Center for nine years, I know how important our programs are to the lives of our students and their families. Growing up in a small town, my brother, who is on the spectrum, had limited access to services staffed by a passionate and well-trained team. I'm proud of what he has accomplished and while I think his public school helped him develop skills to succeed, I wonder what his life would be like if he had more access to quality education and services that more fully understood his needs."

Read more of Nick's story at www.SummitWalk.org.



Why I Walk: Nicole Lamonte-DeGolier, Summit Parent

"There has yet to be one challenge that we were faced with Teddy and his autism journey that we were unable to reach out to Summit about - where they collectively found tools, advice or behavioral interventions to help us overcome them. There is a sense of relief that comes with being a part of a school that treats you more like family than they do a number. I know that as long as Teddy has Summit in his corner, he will continue to blossom into the independent individual we know he has inside of him. These are just a few of the many reasons I walk."

Read more of Nicole's story at www.SummitWalk.org.

Learning Piano Step-by-Step

If you walk by Summit Academy's Creative Arts room on Thursday afternoons, you might hear the beautiful notes from "Somewhere over the Rainbow" or "Ode to Joy" coming from a large, wooden piano. The piano player finding the notes and pressing the keys is Ciara Penque, age 7, who has worked tirelessly with Creative Arts teacher Kelly Bova to learn how to play.

"Ciara has always enjoyed music and loved Creative Arts. The piano in my room started to attract her, and she would ask me if she could play," said Bova.

"My family has always been very music-based. I grew up with a lot of music and theatre and wanted to raise Ciara the same way," said Stefanie Penque, Ciara's mother.

Bova worked with Ciara to determine her interest and skill level; she was surprised by how much Ciara already knew.

"She started to play Chopsticks and said, 'Ms. Kelly, play with me.' She knew it was a duet because her family had shown her. After she played with me, I said, 'Let's take a look at some of my sheet music,'" said Bova.

Bova started working with Ciara once per week using principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to guide Ciara's playing. It took many steps until Ciara could play with sheet music.

"I don't do things typically here," Bova said. "My students don't see the full sheet music right away. We break it down in baby steps. First, we use colored lines and when they master that, we use color-coded notes. Then, I take the colored notes and put them on actual sheet music. Lastly, I fade out the color and it's just the note on the sheet music."

Bova says that Ciara's exemplary memorization skills help make her a wonderful musician.

"What's really cool about Ciara and her music is that she loves to memorize. She's definitely one of those kids who if there's a song she's heard or that she likes, she wants to learn the whole thing. She'll watch you intently, she'll watch your fingers, and she will memorize the whole song," said Bova.

"It has been amazing to watch. She can even pick up music from the radio and learn to play it on the piano," said Penque.

Originally starting with two students, Bova now works with a group of eight Summit Academy students and individualizes her teaching style to their style of learning. Some students, she says, are very structured and need routine. Others want to play all day.

Recently a student visited her classroom requesting to learn the McDonald's jingle. When she said she didn't know the notes - he said that they could figure it out.

"He sat at the piano for fifteen minutes and we figured out how to play the full jingle. He can now play it on multiple octaves. It blew me away," she said.

That student, Ciara, and six others had the chance to showcase their piano skills at Summit Academy's Holiday show in December.

"I was so impressed and could not believe at how far she's come. I am so proud of her," said Penque.



Never Miss a Single Moment!
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Summer Program Applications Open - Apply Today!

TWO specialized summer programs for children with autism or ADHD – ONE great summer! Applications for The Summit Center’s summer programs are now open!

Community Connections and The Summer Treatment Program (STP) are hosted at Willow Ridge Elementary School (480 Willow Ridge, Amherst, NY) - just minutes from the I-990 and I-290. This beautiful, air-conditioned school has plenty of green space for outdoor sports and activities, a great playground, a state-of-the-art computer lab, and much more. Learn more about each program here and [apply today!](#)

Is my child eligible?

Community Connections is designed for children and adolescents entering grade 1- age 16 with social interaction difficulties related to high functioning autism spectrum disorders or other disabilities (involving underdeveloped social abilities). Apply [here](#).

The Summer Treatment Program is open to children and adolescents ages 7-13 with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), learning problems, and related behavior problems. Apply [here](#).



S.T.A.R. Free Parent Training (Support, Training, and Respite)



Transitioning to Adulthood (Ages 16 – 21) Saturday, March 21, 2020, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Is your child approaching the transition to adulthood? Come to our free S.T.A.R. parent training session to receive more information on how to handle this change and talk to other parents.

LOCATION:The Summit Center (Creekside site), 165 Creekside Drive, Amherst, NY 14228

These free, 2 ½ hour parent programs include a 30-minute information session and a two-hour, facilitated open discussion to share ideas and common concerns. Sessions are conducted by professional staff with significant background, training, and experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities. Your child must meet OPWDD eligibility requirements to participate.

On-site respite will be provided for your child with special needs and one sibling (toddlers and older). Parents – please call your child’s Care Manager for eligibility and enrollment information. Upon completion of one 2 ½ hour session, you will be eligible for additional group respite hours which will be provided at The Summit Center on weekends and during school break periods.

Call us at 716.629.3400 to learn more about S.T.A.R. programs.

Call your child’s Care Manager to enroll in this training.

Visit our website (to see additional S.T.A.R. trainings available.)

With a staff of 500 professionals and expertise in autism and social/emotional development, The Summit Center is Western New York’s leading provider of evidence-based educational, behavioral health, adult, and community programs to 1,350 children and adults each year with developmental, social and behavioral challenges.

This newsletter was written and designed by Marketing Communications Coordinator, David Goodwin. Feedback is appreciated. Please email dgoodwin@thesummitcenter.org.

Visit Our Website: www.TheSummitCenter.org