

Hair and Skin Care

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1. General Principles

Each child's **Placement Plan** should show how their hair and skin care needs are being addressed; with a view to encouraging and supporting them to adopt a positive and healthy lifestyle.

In the absence of such a plan, the following must be adhered to:

- a. Hair and skin care products and services may only be obtained from reputable, professional and suitably qualified providers.
- b. Where children have special needs or there are health care concerns regarding their hair or skin, specialist or professional advice must be sought and recommended treatment provided.
- c. Children must be provided with combs, brushes, oils, shampoos, creams and other hair or skin care products suitable to their needs, age and understanding.
- d. Children's daily routine should include opportunities, with support if necessary, to cleanse themselves and brush and/or comb their hair.
- e. Children's hair must be cut and styled by reputable hairdressers or stylists following appropriate discussion and agreement with the parent wherever possible.
- f. Where a child requests, or it seems appropriate for a child to have a hairstyle or skincare product that may significantly change his or her appearance, the manager/supervisor and social worker should be consulted before a decision is taken.
- g. If possible, children should be offered counselling and support on the underlying issues and education about the health risks of such products.
- h. Children who need or choose to shave or remove facial or other body hair should be supported to do so and given allowances for the purchase of suitable oils, creams or shaving materials.

2. Body Piercing, Tattoos etc.

It is acknowledged that body piercing and tattoos are forms of self-expression and fashion, and that many children will experiment with them.

It is illegal for tattooists to tattoo anyone under 18 years old, even with parental consent.

Children can have their bodies pierced at any age.

Children who express an interest in body piercing or tattoos should be treated on a case by case basis depending on their age and level of understanding, but on principle, staff/carers should discourage them, pointing out the possible implications and health care risks; for example, from unsafe materials, needles etc.

Under no circumstances may staff encourage or give consent to children to have their bodies pierced or tattooed.

Children should be informed that it is illegal for tattooists to tattoo them, even with parental consent; if they appear determined, consideration should be given to making the tattooist aware of the age of the child. If children are likely to use materials to tattoo themselves, consideration should be given to confiscating them.

If children appear determined to have their bodies pierced, they should be asked to discuss the matter with their parent(s) and social worker beforehand.

Whether consent is given or not, children cannot be prevented from being pierced.

If they continue to be determined, carers should ensure that measures used for piercing are as safe and hygienic as possible; preferably undertaken by a reputable person.

Piercings may not be undertaken or in any way supported by carers.

If necessary, staff must confiscate any materials or equipment that may be used for it.

If a child does allow their body to be pierced or tattooed, the social worker must be informed and asked to decide whether to notify the parents.