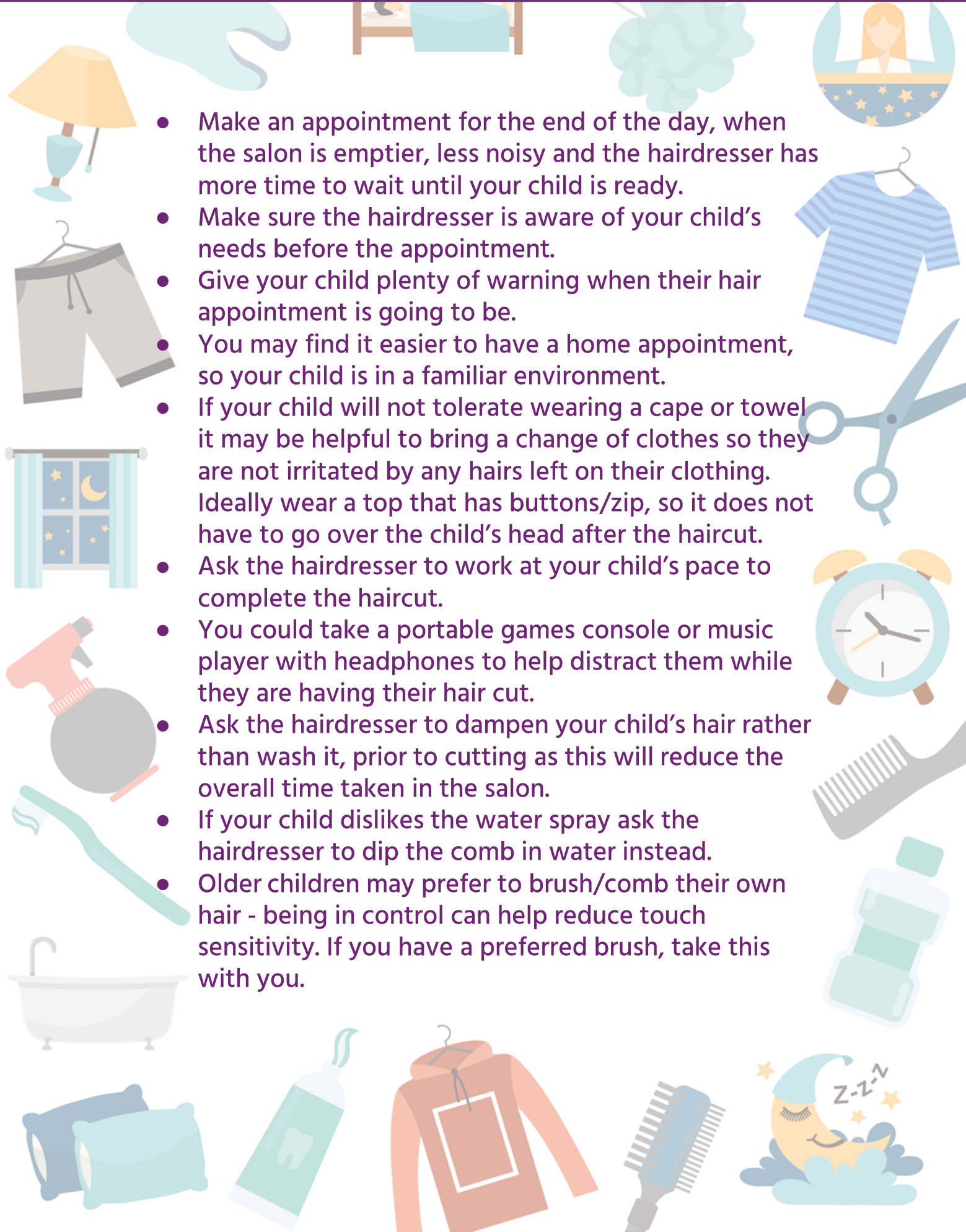


- Make an appointment for the end of the day, when the salon is emptier, less noisy and the hairdresser has more time to wait until your child is ready.
- Make sure the hairdresser is aware of your child's needs before the appointment.
- Give your child plenty of warning when their hair appointment is going to be.
- You may find it easier to have a home appointment, so your child is in a familiar environment.
- If your child will not tolerate wearing a cape or towel it may be helpful to bring a change of clothes so they are not irritated by any hairs left on their clothing. Ideally wear a top that has buttons/zip, so it does not have to go over the child's head after the haircut.
- Ask the hairdresser to work at your child's pace to complete the haircut.
- You could take a portable games console or music player with headphones to help distract them while they are having their hair cut.
- Ask the hairdresser to dampen your child's hair rather than wash it, prior to cutting as this will reduce the overall time taken in the salon.
- If your child dislikes the water spray ask the hairdresser to dip the comb in water instead.
- Older children may prefer to brush/comb their own hair - being in control can help reduce touch sensitivity. If you have a preferred brush, take this with you.



- Ask the hairdresser to warn your child each time they need to touch them to prevent the child being startled.
- Children often find having their fringe cut and the hair around their ears trimmed most difficult, so ask the hairdresser to cut the back of the hair first.
- If your child struggles to tolerate the feel of hair falling into their face, a 'sun visor' cap could be worn for part of the haircut to prevent this happening.
- Find opportunities for your child to watch other people having their hair cut to help them understand what will happen. Books such as 'caring for myself' a social skills storybook by Christy Gast and Jane Krug explain why we need a haircut and what happens at each stage.
- Some children may find it helpful to play-act going to the hairdressers with dolls or other toys and can pretend to be the barber cutting the dolls hair.
- If your child is frightened of the scissors, carry out craft activities at home with safe scissors (under supervision) so they become more familiar with them and less anxious.
- Use a timer to indicate to the child how long the activity will take.
- Use a mirror so your child can see what is happening

Sensory Occupational Therapy Service