

Autism Community Connection

Autismcc Yahoo Group Responds!

Our group is comprised of parents, educators and professionals in the autism community. We welcome parents to ask questions so that together we may share our wealth of collected knowledge and insight.

www.autismcommunityconnection.com - <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/autismcc/>

Subject: Nail Biting and Clipping

Nail Biting

A mom wrote in that her four-year-old son has been biting the skin on his fingers and toes until it bleeds. Although it is painful he can't stop. They tried chewy tubes and bad tasting nail polish but nothing helps. She was looking for advice from fellow moms.

Gloria had also tried numerous methods without success. She then used nail acrylics for her daughter (19-years-old) to break the cuticle pulling, nail biting). She also used a hot wax machine to help soften the skin and cuticles and this worked well.

Dawn is a self-admitted nail/cuticle biter. She suggested that frequent nail filing and keeping the cuticles soft with a grocery store bought cuticle oil could help. She suggested that Kristi watch to see if her son absent-mindedly rubs his thumb along the edge of his nails and cuticles. This could be a sign that the imperfection of the nail and roughness of the cuticle is bothering him. Keeping the nails smooth and imperfection free will help. <http://www.43things.com/things/entries/64725>.

Dee said that every time her son chewed around his nails she would say, "Straw." She supplied bendy straws that he liked to chew on. For the cuticle issue they sprayed his fingertips with Dermoplast, a white spray can at Walgreens with a red spray top. They also got him a pair of white, all cotton gloves at Walgreens and he wore them at school to prevent him from chewing. It took 8 months to wean him off the chewing. After getting through a full day without chewing she rewarded her son with TV or computer time. Her older son also had this issue. They used a nubby ball and he received a quarter every time he grabbed the nubby ball to get over "the feeling" as he called it.

Nail Clipping

Kristi was having difficulty with her son not wanting his toenails clipped. As he becomes older it is becoming difficult to hold him still to get the nails clipped. She is looking for help. Here is what some moms in our group have suggested:

Laurie's daughter also had toe and fingernail issues in the past. She suggested: Make nail clipping a part of the after bath routine when the nails are soft. It relieved the pressure on the nail and did not make the "scary sounding clip noise." Immediately follow the toenail clipping with a firm toe or foot massage with lotion (only if your child likes it) as a reward.

Switch from a regular sized clipper to one of the large toenail clippers. "I could get each nail in one clip and it made it easier for her to count and know that I was really done with each toe."

Do not overcompensate by cutting off too much of the nail. It seemed that cutting too close allowed air to hit that newly exposed part of her skin and this really bothered her. If your child responds well to social stories, write one about nail clipping.

Dee used to clip her son's nails while he was asleep. Then she began having him watch while she did her own nails and his big brother's nails. She would point out that nothing bad happened. This went on for a few months and then she began the process of clipping the nails while he was awake. Dee only did one or two nails a day after bath time. She said it helps to think of this as an issue to work on, "like any other de-sensitization process."