

HAIRCARE TIP SHEET FOR CAREGIVERS OF BLACK FOSTER YOUTH

DID YOU KNOW?

- Foster youth tend to experience high rates of severe depression and low self-esteem.
- Persons with low self-esteem are more susceptible to developing depression.
- Self-esteem has greater impact on a youth's suicide risk when the youth has low family support.
- Externalizing behavior (aggression, antisocial behavior, and delinquency) may be attributed to low self-esteem among other factors.
- California law as of 1/1/2020, California AB-175 Foster Care: rights, Section 16001.9 (a)(3) To receive adequate and healthy food, adequate clothing, grooming and hygiene products, and an age-appropriate allowance. Clothing and grooming and hygiene products shall respect the child's culture, ethnicity, and gender identity and expression.
- California law as of 1/1/2020, the CROWN Act (SB 188) bans discrimination based on one's natural hair in the workplace and K-12 public schools.

PRACTICE TIPS

Trauma-Informed Language Reframe

Instead of saying...

Good hair
Nappy
Coarse
High maintenance
Too much work

Say...

Beautiful hair
Coily or tangled
Strong
Needs special care

Haircare is an important part of hygiene!

Foster youth have the right to receive grooming and hygiene products that respect their culture and ethnicity. It's the law!

BASIC HAIRCARE TIPS

Hair should be washed once every 1-2 weeks; average is once every two weeks.

Hair oil should be applied to the hair and scalp at minimum once per week or more often depending on the hair type.

Hair should be washed using a moisturizing shampoo and conditioner. Shampoo and conditioner should be thoroughly rinsed out of the hair.

Hair should be combed out at minimum once per week or more often unless hair is in a protective style such as braids.

WHEN HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH CAREGIVERS AND GROUP HOME STAFF:

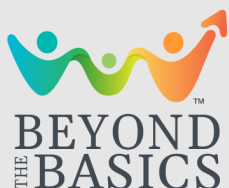
1. Make haircare a topic of conversation during each monthly compliance visit ("just checking in").
2. Inquire about who does their hair, how often, and what is done (i.e., washing, combing, styling, products used).
3. Inquire if the caregiver knows if the minor likes the way they wear their hair and why they like it or not.
4. Inquire if there is anything else the caregiver would like to discuss in regards to the minor's hair.
5. Inquire if the caregiver has the products needed for the minor's hair, and inquire if the caregiver would like to learn how to care for and style the minor's hair in various ways.
6. **Remind** the caregiver or group home staff that some children and youth are afraid, hesitant, or feel ashamed to speak up about any issues with their hair and fail to report if their hair is not being properly cared for, or if they are being teased due to the condition of their hair.

WHEN HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH BLACK CHILDREN & YOUTH:

1. Inquire about how the youth's parents/guardians cared for the youth's hair prior to entering foster care.
2. Make hair care a topic of conversation during each monthly compliance visit ("just checking in").
3. Inquire about who does their hair, how often, and what is done (i.e., washing, combing, styling, products used).
4. Inquire if they like the way they wear their hair and why or why not.
5. Inquire if there is anything else that they would like to discuss in regards to their hair.
6. When working with Black youth, inquire if they have the products they need for their hair, and inquire if they would like to learn how to style their hair in various ways.
7. **Remember**, some are afraid, hesitant, or feel ashamed to speak up about any issues with their hair and fail to report if their hair is not being properly cared for, or if they are being teased or mistreated due to the condition of their hair.

TAKE ACTION

- Discuss this topic with your supervisor when you are assigned a case with Black children.
- Develop a plan with your supervisor to address this topic with the caregiver and family.
- Inquire with parents/guardians about how they cared for their child's hair and what products they used, and ask them if they would be willing to share this information with the new caregivers or group home staff.
- Encourage or at least inform parents and relatives that they are allowed to do their children's hair during visits if they desire.
- Discuss this topic with colleagues to get more ideas and feedback.



For more information, please visit cirinc.org

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