



Hair and Skin Guide for African American Children

The Purpose for this Guide

When a child comes into state custody due to safety or neglect issues, foster parents may not have received training in proper hair and skin care. This information provides some basic hair and skin care principles for children of African American and Bi-Racial descent.

Hair and Scalp Care

Moisturizing African American hair is very important to maintaining a healthy scalp and hair in young children. An African American's hair is coarser and may appear to be dryer than someone who is Caucasian because sebum (a substance from oil follicles) does not flow to the ends of the hair. This is natural for an African American's hair and when understood and managed properly, can spare the

child embarrassment and enhance their self-esteem. If the child's scalp is scaly, flakey and itchy, causing much discomfort, they may have dandruff. In African American children, dandruff may resemble a dry flakey scalp and require moisturizing by lubricating the scalp with oils.

Basic Scalp/Hair Care Principles

It is recommended that you shampoo and condition a child's hair once a week using a product in which the main ingredients are Pure Shea Butter and Jojoba Oil. When washing a coarser hair type too often can make the hair brittle and could possibly damage the hair. It is recommended to apply moisturizer to the hair after washing and conditioning the hair before styling.

Oiling the Hair

Separate the hair with a comb in small sections and oil the scalp, bringing the oil to the ends of the hair. This technique may prevent dandruff. This can be done as a daily maintenance, depending on the hair type.

Cutting/Trimming Hair

Do not try to cut it yourself, as the results may not be what you expect if not familiar with African American hair. Take the child to a professional hair stylist or licensed barber.

Relaxers/Hot Iron

This is not recommended. If circumstances call for this, it is to only be done under the discretion of a License Professional Hair Stylist.

Hair Products

Shampoos with pH balance

- Cantu Shea Butter Shampoo (Walmart)
- Mixed Chicks Hair care products for Bi-racial children (Walmart)
- Design Essential Products (JC Penny Product)
- Motions Hair Products (Walmart)
- Muzani Hair Products
- Beautiful Beginnings Products

Conditioners

- Cantu Shea Butter Conditioner
- Mixed Chicks Hair care products for Bi-racial children (Walmart)
- Design Essential Products (JC Penny Product)
- Motions Hair Products (Walmart)
- Muzani Hair Products
- Beautiful Beginnings

Hair Moisturizers/Oils for Styling

- Tea Tree Oils (Walmart)
- Dax Hair oil (Walmart)
- Mixed Chicks Hair care products for Bi-racial children (Walmart)
- Motions Hair Products (Walmart)
- Muzani Hair Products
- Posners Bergamont (Walmart)
- Pink Moisturizer (Walmart)

Hair Tools

- Wide tooth comb
- Boar Hair Brush
- Wave brush for boys
- Covered bands (without metal)

Skin Care

Environmental factors contribute greatly to the occurrence of dry skin, repeated exposure to solvents, deodorant/fragrant soaps; bubble baths in association with frequent hot bathing will remove skin oil and other natural moisturizing factors (NMF) from the skin, increasing water loss up to seventy-five times the normal rate. Thus, skin is not dry because it lacks "skin oils", but because of dehydration. The purpose of the skin and NMF is to hold the water in the skin. Winter weather is the major cause of dry skin; low humidity, cold air and wind all contribute to the removal of water from the skin. The dry heat of most homes also removes skin's water. It would be recommended to have a humidifier to replace the moisture in the air. It is never recommended to use oil or moisturizer as a treatment for acne or pimples; it will actually make them worse. Proper skin care helps to prevent the ashy appearance of dry skin.

- Shower/bath daily with moisturizing soaps such as white dove or cocoa butter,
- After rinsing off, pat the skin dry with a towel and then immediately apply oils/lotions over the entire body to seal in moisture/water such as cocoa butter lotion/body butter, coconut oil, Argon oil, Shea moisturizing lotion. If using lotion, make sure it is a thick lotion to moisturize the skin and remove dryness.
- It is recommended during the summer a protective sunscreen be applied to all skin areas that are exposed to the sun SPF 30.

Common Skin Disorders

Keloid is a skin condition that looks like raised, shiny bubbly skin. It is treated with antibiotics and anti-inflammatory medication prescribed by a physician.

Mongolian Spot is a benign pigmented lesion that is found in African-American, Asian, and Hispanic children. The color is black or blue-green. This spot is found in the lower spinal area, especially on African-American newborns and in the shoulder area. When this spot is present on an arm or leg, it is usually located over a muscle. An inexperienced observer may mistake a Mongolian Spot for a bruise. If there is concern contact your Pediatrician.

Skin Lotions

- Any type of Cocoa butter lotion (comes in store brands ie Equate at Walmart)
- Vaseline Intensive Care
- Jergens (very dry skin formula)

