



How to Care for *Textured Hair*

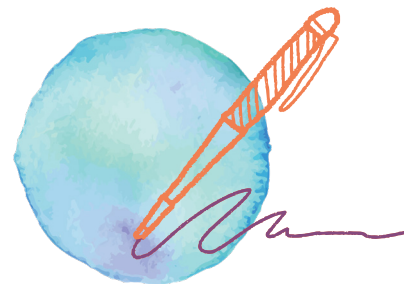
KVC *Crown Care*



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Letter from Dr. Aby



Dear Friends,

I grew up in the suburbs of Toronto, Canada, with my mother and my younger sister. My mother took great pride in our appearance and in making sure we had access to educational and cultural opportunities that enriched our childhoods. While she didn't have a lot of money, every other Saturday morning, we would get up and headed to Edgar's, our Jamaican hairdresser.

In this salon, my sister and I would relax amidst a boisterous mix of laughter, the scent of hair products, disco music, and conversations that occasionally resembled group therapy sessions. For my mother, taking care of our hair was more than just a necessity; it was a demonstration of her pride in us and her need to connect with our community after a hard week. Even with limited resources, this was her most important investment – her children.

At KVC, we understand that caring for children holistically means attending to their needs inside and out, from head to toe. We also recognize that the way we care for children sends a strong message about how much we value and love them.

KVC Crown Care represents one of the ways we can expand opportunities to learn and grow in our mission to support and care for children in the most culturally aware, trauma-informed, and community-based ways possible. Our hope is that you will use this guide to learn new and awesome skills to strengthen bonds and connections with the children you care for.

Sincerely,

Abyssinia



Dr. Abyssinia Washington Tabron
Vice President of Clinical Engagement and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion + Belonging

Introduction



To encourage self-love and self-esteem in children, it's important to help them to feel comfortable in their own skin and connected to their roots. When we look and feel our best, we're well-positioned to be confident, capable, and resilient — and for many, hair is at the heart of it.

Think hair is just hair? Think again! Hair is a form of self-expression and identity, and the significance of our hair reaches far back into cultural history. That said, no two strands of hair are alike! Proper maintenance, styling, and care will look different for every hair type.

The Natural Hair Movement first began in the 1960s and gained widespread recognition in the early 2000s. The movement aims to counter the assumption that only Western beauty standards are desirable and open the world's eyes to the beauty within all cultures, especially regarding Black beauty and African American hairstyles.

Caring for hair that's different from your own can feel intimidating. But with a little education on the right strategies, the right hair care can be life-changing! A little extra TLC can make all the difference. By supporting the natural beauty of children and encouraging them to remain connected to their culture, caregivers can empower children in their natural hair journey. Let's explore how to be the best champion for those with textured hair in your care.



Importance of Hair in Personal and Cultural Identity

For centuries, hair has been an expression of health, beauty, social status, and personality. It has played a crucial role in helping many groups and cultures find a sense of belonging, connection, and pride.



"Our hair is our crown, and it goes beyond speaking about our appearance."

*says Nicole Deere-Andersen,
Human Resource Manager with KVC Nebraska.*

"It tells a story about our histories and our lineage."

"If you look at history, a large part of cultural identity for African Americans is related to and reflected through the hair," explains KVC Kansas Outpatient Therapist Clarissa Johnson. "For instance, during the time frame when African Americans were treated as slaves, textured hair allowed them to hide treasures inside when moving from place to place. Cornrows were even used to design secret maps that helped guide others to safety!"

Hair has the power to affect entire cultures of people while also connecting to each person's individual identity. "Hair is so much bigger than people think," shares Candice Vowels, Director of Program Services with KVC Kentucky. "People judge the way we look, and our hair is a big piece of that."

Children growing up in foster, adoptive, or mixed families may miss developing a connection to their cultural identity because their family members don't share similar hair experiences. Brynn Fowler, Senior Director of Operations and Compliance at Camber Children's Mental Health says, "I grew up with a white mother in a predominantly Caucasian community, and I wanted to look like everyone else, so it was harder for me to fully embrace my naturally wild hair when I was younger. But as an adult, I see women embracing their natural hair, and it's empowering."

Parents and caregivers can help by understanding and embracing textured hair and helping children to maintain and style their hair in a way that embraces and empowers their cultural and personal identity.

Understanding Textured Hair

Different hair requires different care! It's that simple. As Denise Jones, Director of Quality Management with KVC Kentucky, explains, "Caring for textured hair takes intentional effort. As our crown, it shows our sense of confidence and self-esteem, and it's important for it to be strong and healthy."

So, where to start? Let's begin healthy hair care by understanding the basics of curl types and hair structures.

Identifying Curl Type

Within the textured hair category, there are three main curl types most common among the African American, African Caribbean, and Afro-Latinx ethnicities:



Curly (Type 3): Well-defined, distinct curls that will either spiral or form an S-shape. These curls can vary in size or shape. The individual strands of curly hair are tightly packed together, creating the appearance of more fullness. This hair type may be more prone to frizz or dryness, resulting in tangles. Proper moisture and care will help maintain the shape and vitality of the curls.



Coily (Type 4): A fairly tight spring shape that wraps around itself, like a corkscrew. The individual strands are densely packed together, creating these tight coils. With the smaller and more compact curls, the hair overall has great volume definition. Because the hair coils, sebum produced from the scalp has a harder time traveling down the strand, which can result in dry or brittle hair. However, the right products can achieve a bouncy, healthy curl pattern. Due to the tightness of the curls, hair may exhibit shrinkage, appearing shorter than its actual length dry.

★ *Remember shrinkage is a sign of health!*



Kinky (Type 4): An even more tightly coiled and densely packed hair texture. The individual strands/curls will form an S-shaped or Z-shaped pattern. Because the curl pattern has more 'turns,' kinky hair will require more moisture to soften the fibers and nutrition to seal in the moisture while strengthening the fiber. Kinky hair may experience even more shrinkage when dry.

★ *Remember shrinkage is a sign of health!*

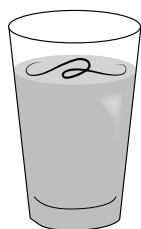
Hair Structure and Characteristics

Did you know? **A typical human scalp has between 80,000 and 120,000 hairs!** In addition to the curl type, all hair types have different structures and characteristics that affect how the hair retains moisture, the thickness of individual strands, and the maintenance required. These structures and characteristics include:

- **Porosity:** Low, medium, and high porosity levels refer to how well the hair retains moisture and hydration. **Low porosity** means the hair has difficulty absorbing moisture, but it retains moisture for longer once it's there. **Medium porosity** means hair absorbs and maintains moisture at a steady rate. **High porosity** hair absorbs moisture quickly but struggles to retain it. This can sometimes, but not always, be due to damage.

- **If you want to test the porosity of your hair, follow these three steps:**

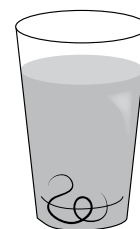
- ▶ Fill a glass with water
- ▶ Drop 1-2 strands of your hair into the glass of water
- ▶ Observe the strands for 1-2 minutes



Low Porosity:
The hair will float.



Medium Porosity:
The hair will sink slowly.



High Porosity:
The hair will sink quickly.

- **Density:** Density is not about thin vs. thick hair. Hair density measures the amount of individual hairs per square inch on one's scalp. Thin vs. thick refers to the width of the hair shaft. However, density refers to the collective group of strands. Hair density will affect the volume and shape of one's hair. Hair density is usually defined as **Low:** fewer strands per square inch. **High:** a lot of strands per square inch. **Medium:** somewhere in between.

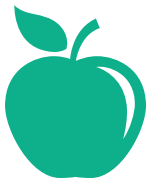
- **A way to measure your hair density is to examine your scalp:** If you pull your hair to the side and the scalp is very visible, you may have low-density hair. If the scalp can barely be seen, you have high density. It's also important to note that different areas of the scalp can vary in density. This is completely normal and nothing to be concerned about.

- **Curl Pattern:** Curl pattern combines the curl shape (or curl type) with two more characteristics: hair shrinkage and retention. **Shrinkage** is the amount of visual length lost as the hair dries, and the curls contract. Remember! Shrinkage indicates healthy hair; it does not change the curl pattern. **Retention** is the amount of time a hair will stay styled. Generally speaking, the more curly and kinky the hair, the better the retention.

As a tip, Jones advises, "You should buy products and focus on styles based on the best options for the full curl pattern."

Factors that Influence Hair Health

When it comes to maintaining healthy hair, physical health matters. What happens inside the body's physical and mental landscape overflows into our skin, nails, and hair health. If the body is struggling, the outer appearance will show it, so it's necessary to remember that nutrition, hydration, hygiene, and mental health influence hair strength, shine, moisture, and bounce.



Nutrition

As with most body processes, hair needs nutrients to flourish. Nutritional deficiencies can cause issues with hair structure and hair growth. Interestingly, Fowler says, "Some Black females struggle with iron levels and have a higher risk of becoming anemic. This affects the collagen in the body, affecting how quickly hair and nails grow and how dry the skin becomes." A well-balanced diet of healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals is a general rule of thumb for healthy hair and skin.



Hydration

Hydration goes beyond strengthening the body. It can also have a significant impact on hair health. Scalp issues and dry hair can be improved with proper hydration, as can thinning and hair loss. Hydration is especially important for those with textured hair since the hair requires more moisture. Aim to drink nearly half of your body weight in ounces of water to maintain adequate hydration.



Hygiene

The scalp is the foundation when it comes to hair. The scalp feeds the hair and provides it with nutrients, which can get stripped away easily by washing textured hair too often. However, if washing doesn't happen enough, too much build-up from dead skin, sebum, dirt, and product residue can accumulate on the scalp, preventing the hair from receiving what it needs to thrive.



Mental and Emotional Health

Mental health also plays a significant role in hair health. **Johnson notes, "Trauma can affect someone on a physiological level and show even through their hair, and taking care of ourselves through a chaotic situation can make a big difference."**

Whatever happens within our mental and emotional landscape will somehow come through the hair. But remaining consistent with self-care and caring for mental health can make a huge difference. Feeling confident about one's appearance can also contribute to positive mental health for children with textured hair!



Haircare and Maintenance

With a solid understanding of your child's curl type, hair structure, and hair health, you're ready to establish a proper hair care routine. But what are the correct steps, and how do you choose the right products?

"It's not a one-size-fits-all kind of thing," Clarissa Johnson says. "And if you're going to take care of your hair or the hair of others, it's about figuring out what the hair needs."



To help you get started, a standard hair care maintenance routine for textured hair involves:

- Washing
- Styling
- Moisturizing and Sealing
- Detangling
- Conditioning

Product lines for textured hair like Shea Moisture, Kinky-Curly, Melanin Haircare and As I Am can be found at most grocery stores or supercenters, while more high-end brands can be researched and purchased online or through salons specializing in textured hair.

Products and Ingredients to Avoid

Before getting started, it's essential to identify which products and ingredients to avoid when caring for textured hair, just as it is to find the best products. When shopping for someone with textured hair, be sure to check shampoos, conditioners, moisturizers and styling products to avoid the following damaging ingredients:

- **Alcohol and other stripping ingredients**, as these can cause dryness, brittleness and breakage
- **Silicones**, which can coat the hair and prevent absorption
- **Sulfates**, which can dry up natural oils
- **Parabens**, which can cause dryness, irritation and itching
- **Sodium chloride**, which can strip natural oils and cause an itchy scalp and lead to breakage

Washing and Conditioning

Washing

To eliminate buildup and cleanse the hair, shampooing is a must. **Weekly cleansing will help promote growth, length, and moisture retention and maintain the overall health of the scalp.** Since the porosities of textured hair require special attention to moisture levels, there are various options to consider for keeping the scalp clean without drying out textured hair:

● **Normal shampooing:** Shampoo cleanses by stripping the hair and scalp of excess oils and debris. For textured hair, shampooing is typically recommended about 4 times a month to prevent the hair from drying out. However, 1-2 times a month can also be standard, depending on hair type. The rule of thumb is to wash your hair when you notice product buildup, an itchy scalp, or an overly oily scalp.

Choosing a sulfate-free shampoo is the best option for curlier hair.

- ▶ Once a week if you are prone to an oilier scalp.
- ▶ Twice a month if you heat style your hair, whether through a diffuser, blow dryer, or curling wand.
- ▶ Once a month if the hair is dryer or the scalp is more on the normal to dry side.

● **Pre-shampoo method (Pre-poo):** A technique that acts as a protective shield during shampooing. Used to prevent moisture from being stripped from the hair, it can add hydration and lead to easier detangling. Pre-pooes can include various options depending on hair type; most common pre-pooes include hair masks (type 4), hair oil, conditioner, or a DIY.

- ★ An overnight pre-poo will yield the best results; however, pre-pooing right before a wash-day will still benefit the hair.
- ★ **How to pre-poo:** Coat your strands with the product of your choice. Ensure you're using the right product for your hair texture to keep your strands in order. Place a shower cap and bonnet over the hair overnight to prevent product from trickling onto bed sheets. After the treatment is complete, rinse your hair with lukewarm water. Proceed to shampoo and conditioning afterward.



Washing and Conditioning - continued

- **Co-washing:** Many recommend a technique called “Co-washing,” which is washing the hair with conditioner and skipping the shampoo step. This helps hair retain moisture and protects it from drying out, but still lightly washes the hair with water and physical exfoliation. Co-washing can be great and provide plenty of benefits, especially for dryer hair types; however, clarifying the hair with shampoo at least once a month to prevent product build-up is still essential.

Regarding frequency, the timeline looks much different for textured hair than for those with other hair types. With textured hair, washing every three to four days is considered to be frequent. Many with textured hair opt to wash every seven to eight days, with some washing every 10.

Again, everyone’s hair is different!

Children or teens who exercise or play sports might need to cleanse their hair more often, as oils and sweat can cause buildup within the hair; however, this may be another time to consider using a co-washing or pre-poo (with shampoo) method, so the hair isn’t completely stripped of its necessary hydration.



Washing and Conditioning - continued

Conditioning

After washing the hair using one of the methods above, it's time to condition. Here are a few different ways to condition textured hair:

- **Rinse out conditioning:** Applied to freshly washed hair, conditioner helps balance the pH of the hair after shampooing. Conditioning will further rehydrate, strengthen, and protect the strands. Those with textured hair should always use a regular conditioner to ensure moisture is added to the hair and maintain a healthy hair routine. By smoothing out the cuticle, it will also make combing and detangling the hair more manageable.
 - ▶ It's typical to leave rinse-out conditioner on the hair for 3-5 minutes, allowing the ingredients to penetrate the hair.
- **Deep conditioning:** A deep conditioner will not only help stabilize the pH, but it will also help rebuild compromised protein structure, increase hair elasticity, and help moisture retention. For particularly dry, chemically damaged, or fragile hair, using a deep conditioner once or twice a month may help keep hair more moisturized and protected against breakage.
 - ▶ It's typical to leave a deep conditioner in the hair for at least 15-30 minutes. However, coupling the deep conditioner with heat for about 30-45 minutes for a stronger treatment can help achieve deeper penetration of the hair shaft.
 - ★ Ingredients to look for in deep conditioners can include humectants, emollients, and hydrolyzed proteins.
- **Leave-in conditioner:** A leave-in conditioner supports textured hair by taming frizz, protecting it from heat during styling, giving extra nourishment, and helping curls keep their shape and bounce. This can be added to the hair as a last step in conditioning and before detangling for more slip.



Once you know how often to wash your curly hair, how frequently it should be conditioned should follow suit. If your hair tends to be dryer, adding hair masks or a deep conditioner bi-weekly can help retain moisture and soften the curls better. It is important to remember that you can over-condition hair. If the curly hair looks limp and lifeless, it may be time to cut back on conditioning and opt for a protein treatment.

Detangling Techniques

Curls, coils, and kinks tend to tangle more easily than straighter or wavy hair types, and it's vital to detangle properly to avoid frizz or breakage. Leave-in detanglers and detangling sprays are popular choices to avoid damaging hair. These products increase the amount of 'slip' in the hair, which both helps the detangling process be less painful and protects the hair from breaking. Win-win!

Detangling takes time and patience. However, gentle detangling methods can be a game-changer and should be utilized for efficiency and comfort. Jones speaks from experience, saying, "Make sure the hair is adequately moisturized with leave-in conditioner and additional spray detangler before brushing, and always brush from end to root to avoid damage."



"Make sure the hair is adequately moisturized with leave-in conditioner and additional spray detangler before brushing, and always brush from end to root to avoid damage."



For minimal stress, work through the hair in smaller sections while very gently combing out any knots one inch at a time with fingers or a detangling tool. To reduce frizz, a wide-toothed comb or detangling brush works best in textured hair. And remember: a little patience goes a long way!



Moisturizing and Sealing

Moisture is essential for keeping textured hair healthy and happy. But it's also more difficult to retain. So, it may be necessary to moisturize multiple times a week to prevent the hair from drying and breaking. Moisturizing product choices and methods differ depending on the individual; some might include:

● Oils:

- ▶ **Moisturizing Oils:** Thinner oils such as coconut, olive, and avocado oil provide hair with hydration, helping to seep into the dehydrated strands
- ▶ **Sealing Oils:** Oils like castor, grapeseed, jojoba oil are not used for hair penetration or offering much moisture. Instead, they are used to lock in the hydration already there when layered over nourishing products.

- **Custard and Butter/Creams:** As a thicker moisturizing option, custards and butter act as a moisturizing sealer to protect the hair from dryness and breakage. Butter or creams can be applied daily to dry or damp hair and work best when using a protective hairstyle. It's best to apply these products on damp hair after a leave-in conditioner by massaging down the length of the hair.

★ **What's the difference?** Custards are typically thicker and have gel-like properties; they are best used with wash-and-goes. Butter/Creams tend to be better suited for low-maintenance protective hairstyles. Shea butter, mango butter, and murumuru butter are great textured hair options.

- **Mists and Refreshers:** Sprays like these are an easy way to revive, refresh, and moisten hair throughout the day. These are often made with honey or argan oil to boost curls and minimize frizz.

- **Other Methods:** Aloe vera and honey can also be used as moisturizing agents for textured hair, although they usually work best formulated into a hair oil or cream.



Moisturizing and Sealing - continued

Application Method

Leave-In, Oil, Cream — Which Method is Best?

To obtain the desired results, it's best to pick a method of product application that works well based on the hair's porosity. Liquids, oils, and creams are product staples, but two different methods have been developed over the years: LOC (leave-in, oil, cream) vs. LCO (leave-in, cream, oil).

- **LOC (Leave-in, Oil, Cream) Method:** The LOC method helps to maximize how well the hair retains moisture. It starts with the lightest layer of product and ends with the heaviest layer. Those with high porosity hair should opt for this method. High porosity has trouble retaining moisture; the thickest product (cream) should be applied last to help retain and seal in more moisture.
- **LCO (Leave-in, Cream, Oil) Method:** Those with low porosity hair will benefit from using the LCO method. This hair type has a tight cuticle, making it more difficult to infuse moisture. The liquid wets the hair, the cream moisturizes, and the oil seals in the cream, so it moves deeper into the cuticle.

Not everyone with textured hair needs to use one of these methods since their scalp may produce enough oil naturally but may instead benefit from something like an oil sheen product that limits the amount of strays or frizz and gives the hair a healthy shine.

Sealing in Moisture for Textured Hair

In addition to moisturizing every morning and night, those with textured hair should wear a satin scarf or bonnet while sleeping to seal in the moisture, protect against breakage, reduce frizz, and maintain curls or coils.



Styling Methods

Historically, in the United States and other predominantly white countries, textured hairstyles—specifically any protective hairstyle—haven’t always been widely accepted. But today, the right to wear textured hair in any style is more protected.

Deere-Andersen explains, “The world is our oyster thanks to the CROWN (Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act,” which enables those with textured hair to wear protective styles at school and work.

Deere-Andersen explains, “The world is our oyster thanks to the CROWN (Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act,” which enables those with textured hair to wear protective styles at school and work. Thanks to laws similar to the CROWN Act passed in several states, communities are countering the stigma against textured hair, allowing for more protective and healthy styling.

Types of Styling Methods

While styling methods may vary in practicality and effectiveness depending on curl type, the following methods are popular for textured hair today:



Natural: A wash-and-go style where hair is set with mousse or cream.



Stretched: A way of elongating or changing the natural curl shape. Popular styles are Bantu knots, braid outs, and twists.



Texturized: A chemical product and treatment that manipulates the hair to smooth and lessen frizz while loosening curls.



Accessorized: Styled naturally and decorated with headbands, bows, and beads or wrapped in a hair wrap or scarf.

Styling Methods - continued

Types of Styling Methods



Silk press: A non-chemical straightening method where the hair is shampooed, moisturized, blown out, then pressed with a flat iron for silky smooth hair. Remember that heat styling is very drying and may not be recommended for fragile curl types like kinky hair.



Dreadlocks: Also known as “locs,” dreadlocks are rope-like where the hair is twisted and matted.



Buzz Cut: A short cut all around the head. Designs can be shaved into the hair. This style is most common for boys and men with textured hair.



Fade: A style in which the hair is cut closer to the head on the sides and a little longer on top. This style is popular for boys but may be worn by anyone, and the length of the hair on top can vary.

Styling Methods - continued

Protective Styling

Protective styles are a beautiful and unique way to protect hair from everyday wear and tear and significantly reduce the frequency of styling. A **“protective style” protects the ends to promote growth while avoiding heat styling.** Certain protective styles, like braids and cornrows, can be worn for as long as two months with proper care and maintenance, which certainly makes up for how long they take to do in the first place! Here are some popular protective styles to consider:



Twists: A method of sectioning the hair protectively and styling it without the use of braids. Sections of hair are split in half, and then the two halves are twisted together, creating individual twists all over the head.



Turbans: Fabrics made from softer materials like satin are worn decoratively around the hair. This style prevents environmental damage and breakage while locking in moisture.



Weaves or Wigs: Usually, the hair is braided in cornrows, and then a weave, or wig, is installed on top. The wig can be sewn to the hair for a more permanent style or kept loose for easy interchangeability.



Cornrows: The hair is braided in an upward motion very close to the scalp, sometimes ending in thin braids going down the back of the head, depending on hair length. Cornrows can also be styled in crochet braids, where a crochet or latch hook is used to loop loose or braided hair extensions around the sections.



Box Braids: With a wide variety of styles to choose from and additional creative touches like beads or shells, box braids are a wonderful opportunity for self-expression! Box braids create individual sections in the hair and sometimes lengthen them with loose hair extensions or yarn.

Styling Methods - continued

Balancing Styles with Hair Care Maintenance

Hairstyles and maintenance need to be manageable for both caregivers and children, and the desired style influences the maintenance required.

“Caring for the hair really has a lot to do with the style you’re going for and what you’re able to manage because so many products have different effects on the hair and may take more effort than you’re willing to give,” explains Candice Vowels, KVC Kentucky Director of Program Services.



The time that regular hair maintenance takes is a serious commitment for textured hair, and it's a balancing act. If it becomes overwhelming, remember to stick with the basics first.



Styling Methods - continued

Haircuts and Trims

Even with the additional attention to the maintenance of textured hair at home, going in for haircuts and trims is essential to reduce breakage and promote hair growth. Trims for textured hair help to cut down on brittle ends and uneven breakage and help avoid frizz. It's normal for trim appointments to be scheduled about every 6-8 weeks. Haircuts may only need to be done every 4-6 months. Remember, no two people are the same! It's smart to consult a stylist about the best frequency.



Some salons and stylists ask for hair to be washed and moisturized before a client arrives, while others will wash and moisturize as part of the appointment. Each stylist or barber considers the curl type, pattern, density, length, and shape after shrinkage, with some cutting the hair curl by curl. When it is time for a cut, here are a few go-to options to keep textured hair healthy and ready for styling. For children, these include:



A Bob: A short to medium-length hairstyle that relaxes the waves, makes styling easier, and allows for braids and other protective styles to be still worn.



An Afro Cut: A styled cut for girls and boys, allowing the combing out of natural hair growth into a more full and rounded shape around the head.



A Straight Lob: A simpler medium cut and style where the hair is often straightened and parted to the side.



Curly Cut: Unlike a typical haircut on blown-out or straightened hair, a curly cut is done on the natural hair in an unmanipulated state. The hair can be cut according to how it would naturally fall when worn in a curly state.

Styling Methods - continued

For boys, haircuts and trims vary. This is because some styles require more upkeep and shaping compared to others. Vowels laughs, “My brother takes great care of his hair and gets more trims than I probably wash my hair!” Barber shops specializing in textured hair are a great place for young boys to get cuts and styles, and they are also a great source of additional information on hair care and maintenance.

Tips for Finding a Stylist

Finding the right stylist can seem daunting. After all, Deere-Andersen says, “It’s like a marriage, with that level of commitment between you and a stylist.” When a caregiver is searching for a stylist for a child, they must choose someone who will get the haircut right but also someone the child can trust and feel comfortable with.

“Finding a beautician is a big deal because it takes a lot of trust to let someone put their hands in your hair,” Johnson says. With the variety of hair structures and individual needs, one great way to find a stylist is by word of mouth.

Don’t be afraid to shop around when searching for the right stylist. Visit salons and let the stylist look at your child’s hair, feel it, and share their thoughts and recommendations for cutting and styling. Ask hair stylists if they’re comfortable with textured hair and their experience when cutting, styling, and caring for clients with textured hair. If a stylist says they’re “willing to try,” it’s best to move on because they likely don’t have enough experience with textured hair to give you what you want.

Check to see if the stylist is active on social media, as there’s a good chance they post pictures of the types of hair and styles they specialize in, and you can confirm if their work matches up with the hair type and style the child wants. You can also try searching phrases like “hair salons for Black hair near me” or “hair salons for curly hair near me.”



Hair and Culture: Celebrating Diversity and Avoiding Stereotypes

Recognizing textured hair's cultural significance and embracing its history and beauty is important. By celebrating diversity, especially regarding beauty, this action sends a message to children that beauty is diverse, and so is the variety of textures, styles, colors, and fashions.

When you properly care for a child's textured hair and educate yourself on their cultural history, you ensure that their natural beauty is admired while avoiding common stereotypes and appropriation like this:



- ▶ **Touching Hair:** Hair is an extension of the body, and for many of us, a sensitive aspect of who we are. It's personal and emotional and an expression of self that can communicate parts of ourselves to others. **For many, hair represents a personal boundary and is not meant for others to touch without permission.**

As Fowler explains, "You don't just reach out and touch a black person's hair. It's just something you don't do."

Although someone might not intend to be harmful and may even be trying to share a compliment, it's a sign of respect to ask permission before touching another person's hair, no matter their background.

"You don't just reach out and touch a black person's hair. It's just something you don't do."

- ▶ **Language and Vocabulary:** Using appropriate language is essential when speaking about appearance, and you must **avoid using hurtful and offensive words.** For instance, the word "nappy" is a racial slur for textured hair that should never be said.
- ▶ **Frequency of Washing:** **Not washing hair every day does not equate to being dirty,** and washing too frequently can cause a lot of damage to textured hair.
- ▶ **Texturism:** Texturism is the idea that certain natural hair patterns (geared towards looser and bouncier curls) are more desirable and beautiful than others. Through education and advocacy, **it is important to accept those with all hair types, including kinkier, tighter curls, as beautiful and healthy.**



Hair and Culture: Celebrating Diversity and Avoiding Stereotypes - continued

Caregivers might have children in their care with differing levels of self-maintenance needs. For instance, children who don't have textured hair will require fewer products and accessories to maintain healthy, stylish hair.

Just because one child needs more help and attention while maintaining their appearance doesn't mean it's unfair to others. **Teaching children about others' needs can address any issues that come up.**

Teaching Children About Haircare

Teaching children about their hair and personal maintenance can be beneficial for encouraging a positive self-image and self-care. When parents and caregivers rush through, ignore, or treat this time like a chore, it sends the message that self-care and hair maintenance aren't important. Johnson says, "Caregivers need to remember that children often need help with their self-care routines, and their appearance reflects on parents and caregivers too."

Coaching children with interactive and age-appropriate routines should help children learn the steps more quickly and take pride in their appearance.

"Textured hair takes time, but if caregivers can do it with love instead of viewing it as a chore, then it's more enjoyable for them and the children," said Jones. "Plus, children will learn better in that environment."



Tips for Fostering a Sense of Pride in the Beauty of Natural Hair

● Allow children to have a sense of ownership with their hair.

Ask what cut or style they'd like, and allow them to participate in the conversation with stylists. By doing this, you're allowing the child to feel a sense of autonomy that is especially empowering in cases where life is chaotic, and they feel a loss of control.



● Engage in positive interactions.

“Talk to your children while you’re doing their hair and explain the process and the steps,” Jones advises, “but you can also use it as a bonding moment and maybe even practice positive affirmations.”

Try asking children to repeat affirmations like, “I love my beautiful hair,” or “My hair is healthy and strong.”

● Take the journey together.

Show an interest in a child’s hair and the significance it plays in their life. Read books, watch videos, or search online for different styles together and turn it into a special time of connection.

● Use play as a method of teaching.

One interactive way to teach children about textured hair is through dolls. For example, Healthy Roots Dolls feature a variety of textured hair types, making styling fun and familiar for children while also teaching them how to care for their hair through play.



Healthy Roots Dolls

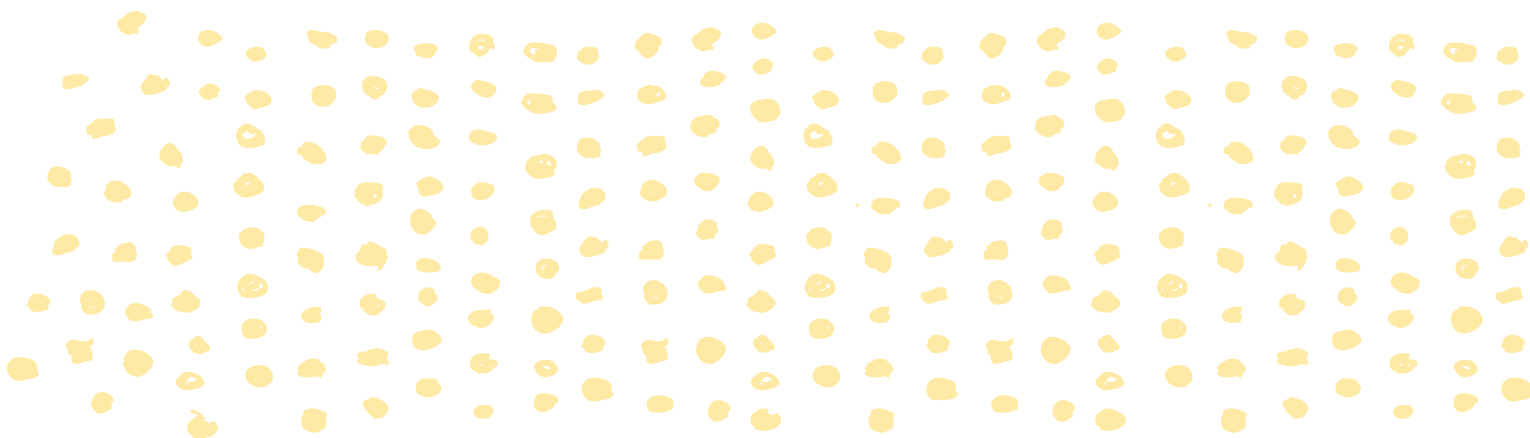
Troubleshooting Common Challenges

Patience is a virtue when it comes to working with textured hair, and the natural hair journey is a process. **Remain calm and know that it may take a few tries to find the best products, styles, and routines for the children in your care.** Focus on doing your best and not giving up.



“It’s also a reminder of the human experience,” Deere-Andersen says, “Even though I’ve had this hair my whole life, I can say that with all the experience I’ve had, I’m still not an expert, and I’m always looking for new ways to care for it and better products to use.”

That said, plenty of people willing to help may have had more experience with textured hair than others. Jones suggests, “Lean on your community, and if you see someone with nice hair similar to yours or the children’s, then ask them for details, and they will give you the information that you need.”



Troubleshooting Common Challenges - continued

Common Haircare Challenges

- **Dryness:** If the hair has become too dry and needs repair, many factors could have caused this change. Cutting back on or eliminating heat styling, washing less frequently, or using a co-wash can help. Deep conditioning the hair more, getting a trim, using moisture-locking oils, or trying a moisturizing hair mask can help bring back those moisturized curls.

- ★ Remember that drier or colder weather can also affect the dryness of hair. Water is hair's best friend. Continuing to moisturize the hair daily will be vital in these conditions.



- **Tangling:** When in doubt, keep the hair in small sections, wet it down (and keep it moist) with a detangler, mist, or other moisturizers to increase slip, use fingers, a wide-toothed comb, or detangling brush, and remain patient.

- ★ Remember to switch up the number of sections. Typically, when washing, hair is split into four quadrants, all being pulled away from the crown. Tension caused by brushing the hair in the same sections too often can cause hair loss and breakage. Adding an extra fifth section or switching up the sections can avoid repeated tension in the same areas.



- **Breakage:** A silk pillowcase and a bonnet or silk hair scarf to sleep in will protect the hair from drying out and causing friction, resulting in breakage. If you're looking for something extra to strengthen hair and help with breakage, Olaplex products may be a good fit.

- ★ The most common reasons for breakage are hairstyles that are too tight, damaging products, aggressive brushing/ combing, or lack of regular trimming. **Textured hair can grow healthy and happy through gentle and attentive hair care.**



When to Seek Professional Advice

Caring for a hair type that differs from your own can be a major source of struggle for parents and caregivers. However, for those willing to learn, asking for advice can bring them closer to their children and make home routines more manageable.

If haircare is an issue, ask a trusted stylist with textured hair experience for help. Stylists aren't only able to help with salon visits; they can also recommend specific products (shampoos, conditioners, detanglers, oils, and other items) to use for proper home hair care. "Ask for the help that you need while you're face to face with a professional," Fowler recommends. "They'll give you the tips that you need to succeed."



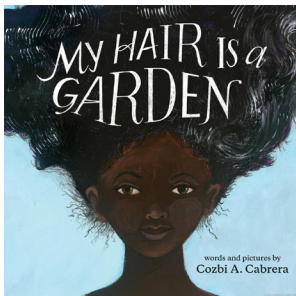
"It's okay not to know how to care for textured hair. And it's okay to ask for help. This is a big part of advocating for those in your care." encourages Brynn Fowler, Senior Director of Operations and Compliance at Camber Children's Mental Health.

You've Got This

A willingness to learn is one of the best ways caregivers can show children in their care that they support them. Great texture requires great responsibility. Caregivers are not only moisturizing, brushing, and styling but also supporting and encouraging personal and cultural expression, which will help shape the child's identity and help them both now and in the future. **Remember: You've got this! Caring for textured hair in the right way can be empowering and joyful for everyone.**



Additional Resources



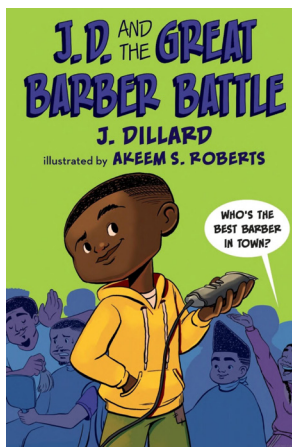
My Hair is a Garden,
by Cozbi A. Cabrera -
A great story for girls with information and tips for haircare and styling in the back.



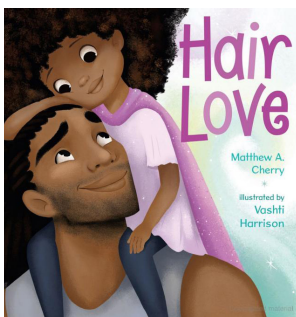
Cool Cuts,
by Mechal Renee Roe -
A book for boys 5-8 years old that reflects hair and cultural positivity.



Happy Hair,
by Mechal Renee Roe -
A fan favorite for young girls with textured hair. Illustrations and descriptions of different hairstyles are positive and fun affirmations to boost self-esteem.



J.D. and the Great Barber Battle,
by J. Dillard -
An award-winning book about how to find the best barber in town.



Hair Love,
by Matthew A. Cherry -
This #1 New York Times Best Seller follows a dad who struggles to style his little girl's hair but, with some help, finally succeeds.

Where to Find Products



Understanding the unique needs of your child's hair can be challenging, but with the right products and guidance, you can confidently care for their beautiful curls, coils, and waves. Whether you're searching for the perfect shampoo, conditioner, or styling products, we've curated a selection of recommendations to suit various hair types and concerns.

For your convenience, we've included links to shop for these products online through Amazon, Target, and Walmart, making it easier than ever to access the tools you need to keep your child's hair healthy and vibrant.

Additionally, for those seeking personalized advice and hands-on instruction, we encourage you to explore local hair salons or stores where professionals can offer 1-on-1 guidance on hair care and styling techniques.

Both Walmart and Target have created an entire section of their beauty departments dedicated to products used in caring for textured hair.



Camille Rose Sweet Ginger Cleansing Rinse

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Target](#)

Price: \$11.95

Purpose: Shampoo

Directions: Shampoo hair twice for deep cleanse. Rinse after cleansing.



Mielle Rosemary Mint Strengthening Hair Masque

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Target](#)

Price: \$8.99

Purpose: Deep Conditioner

Directions: Section hair in 4 parts. Apply from ends to roots, detangling the hair in the same order with a brush or comb. Leave the product in the hair for 15 minutes to 1 hour. (This can be paired with a hair steamer if applicable for deeper penetration).



Camille Rose Moroccan Pear Conditioning Custard

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Target](#)

Price: \$10.99

Purpose: Conditioner

Directions: To be used after rinsing out the deep conditioner. Again, section the hair into four quadrants and apply from the ends to the roots. Detangle once more and twist each quadrant for maintenance. Leave in for 10 minutes, and then rinse out the product.

Where to Find Products



Kinky-Curly Knot Today Leave-In Detangler

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#) (3 pack), [Target](#)

Price: \$12.99/each

Purpose: Leave-In Conditioner

Directions: Apply a generous amount to wet hair after washing. It can be used whether performing a wash-and-go (to be accompanied by a gel and mousse for this style; we recommend Uncle Funky's Daughter Gel and Innersense Volumizing Foam) or a protective style (i.e., twist out, braid out, Bantu knots).



As-I-Am Double Butter Rich Daily Moisture

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Walmart](#)

Price: \$9.80 for 8oz.

Purpose: Moisture Butter

Directions: Applied after leave-in conditioner, mainly used for protective styling, i.e. twist out, mini twist, braid out, etc.



Mielle Organic Rosemary Mint Oil

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Target](#), [Walmart](#)

Price: \$8.99 - \$9.99

Purpose: Hair Growth Oil

Directions: To be applied to ends daily. As well as roots 1x a week or more, depending on hair type. It can be used for LOC or LCO method of styling.



Tangle Teezer Detangling Brush

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Target](#), [Walmart](#)

Price: \$10.99 - \$15.99

Purpose: Detangling Brush.

Directions: Any time you need to detangle hair, this brush eases the process with low hair loss. Start from ends to roots; working your way through in sections.



Alpre Hair Spray Bottle

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Walmart](#)

Price: \$6.99

Purpose: Spray Bottle

Direction: Continuous mist spray bottle used to refresh hair whenever or apply hydration when styling hair if sections start to dry out.

Where to Find Products



Silk Bonnet

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Target](#), [Walmart](#)

Price: \$5.00 - \$6.99

Purpose: To wear at night. Protects hair from damage while sleeping.



Satin Hair Scrunchies

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Target](#), [Walmart](#)

Price: \$6.50 - \$8.00 for multi-packs

Purpose: To style hair. This is a more protective option than rubber or elastic ties.



Slick Back Hair Brush Set

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Walmart](#)

Price: \$4.89 - \$6.69 for a 3-piece set

Purpose: The nylon edge brush is to help maintain edges. The comb and larger nylon brush are used for styling slick buns.

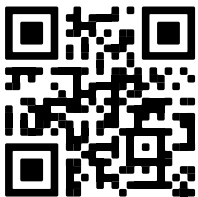


Red by Kiss Edge Fixer Hair Shine Gel

Purchase Options: [Amazon](#), [Walmart](#), [Target](#) (1 oz. for \$3.89)

Price: \$8.99

Purpose: Edge Control



Visit www.kvc.org/haircare or scan this QR code to learn more about these products and find additional resources.

YouTube, Social Media and Websites



- ▶ [Whitney White](#) (Instagram)
<https://www.instagram.com/natural85/>



- ▶ [Yinka Naturalista](#) (Instagram)
<https://www.instagram.com/yinkanaturalista/>



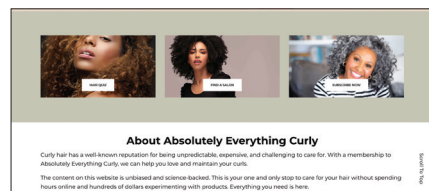
- ▶ [Caring for Textured Hair and Routine + Tips for Foster and Adoptive Parents: Christy Gior](#) (YouTube)
<https://youtu.be/oOqCXUaAxu4?si=ly3wxCzcaP2atzql>



- ▶ [Caucasian Mother Caring for Young Girl's Textured Hair: Tami Majtan](#) (YouTube)
<https://youtu.be/9-MaQVbcudA?si=tO3lrREPOUnU1dDZ>



- ▶ [Dads Learning to Do Daughters Hair: Today Show](#) (YouTube)
<https://youtu.be/4equ4zctCSO?si=sRNnRHBiUjIXMPpS>



- ▶ [Absolutely Everything Curly](#) - An informational website that's all-encompassing for those with textured hair. There's even an entire section for "Little Curlies."
<https://absolutelyeverythingcurly.com/>

Acknowledgments



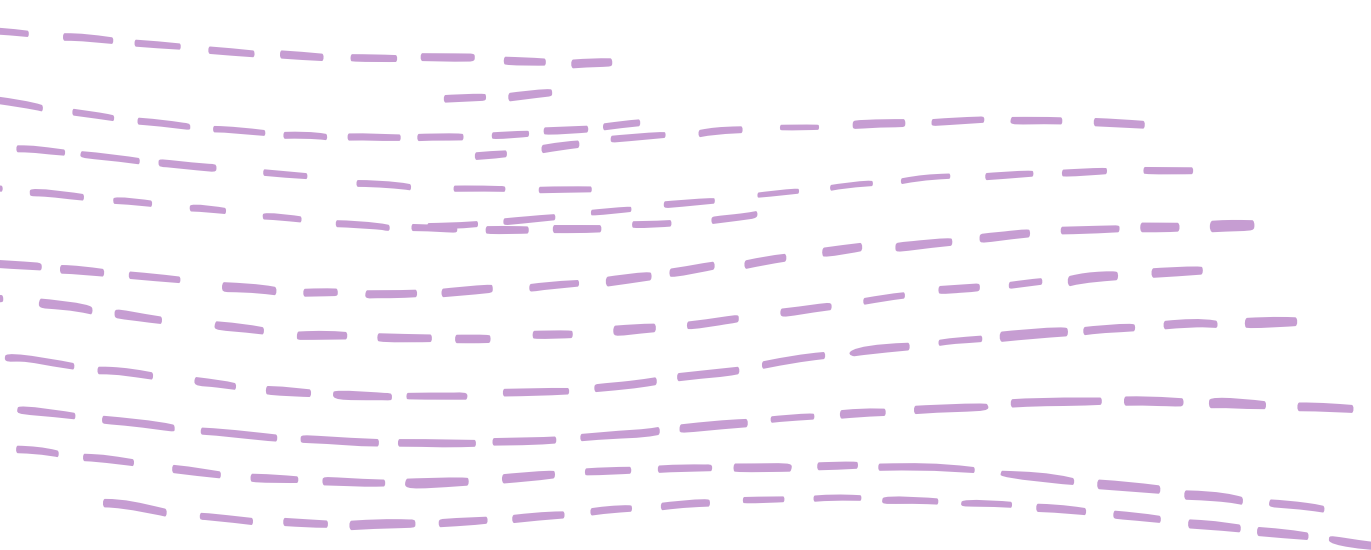
We want to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to KVC Health System's How to Care for Textured Hair guide.

A huge thank you to Dr. Abyssinia Washington Tabron, Nicole Deere-Andersen, Brynn Fowler, Clarissa Johnson, Denise Jones, Candice Vowels and Brontea Washington for sharing their expertise and personal experiences. Your insights have been incredibly valuable in helping children and families understand this important topic and its impact. Because of you, this guide will strengthen community bonds and bring families closer together.

We also want to give a special shout-out to [The Connection Shop](#) for their hard work in drafting and writing this guide. Their efforts have been crucial in bringing together the knowledge and experiences of our contributors, creating a resource that truly connects us all.

And of course, thank *you* for downloading this guide! Your dedication to helping children feel valued and teaching them self-care skills will make a huge impact. By using this guide, you are building a world in which everyone feels safe and connected to a strong family and healthy community.

We all need connection.



Want More in Life?

Here's a way to experience the joy
of parenthood and help children

Over 400,000 U.S. children
are in crisis due to child abuse, neglect
or other family challenges. The need
for new foster and adoptive parents is
greater than ever.

Whether you are single or married,
own or rent your home, have children
already or don't, work full-time or
stay home, you may qualify.
We provide free training,
24/7 support, and monthly
reimbursement to meet
the child's needs.

We offer **FREE**
training classes
and support you
every step of
the way.



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our work is
helping people.



At KVC, we envision a world where every person is safe and connected to a strong family and a healthy community. Every day we work toward that goal by:

- Giving youth the caring attention and clinical treatment they need to prevent suicide and other mental health crises
- Providing 24/7 support to children rescued from abuse and neglect, partnering with caring relatives and foster families so children can heal from trauma
- Stabilizing and strengthening families in crisis through in-home support
- Matching children with adoptive families to give them love, safety and a sense of belonging
- Working alongside complex agencies and systems, sharing best practices to achieve results
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