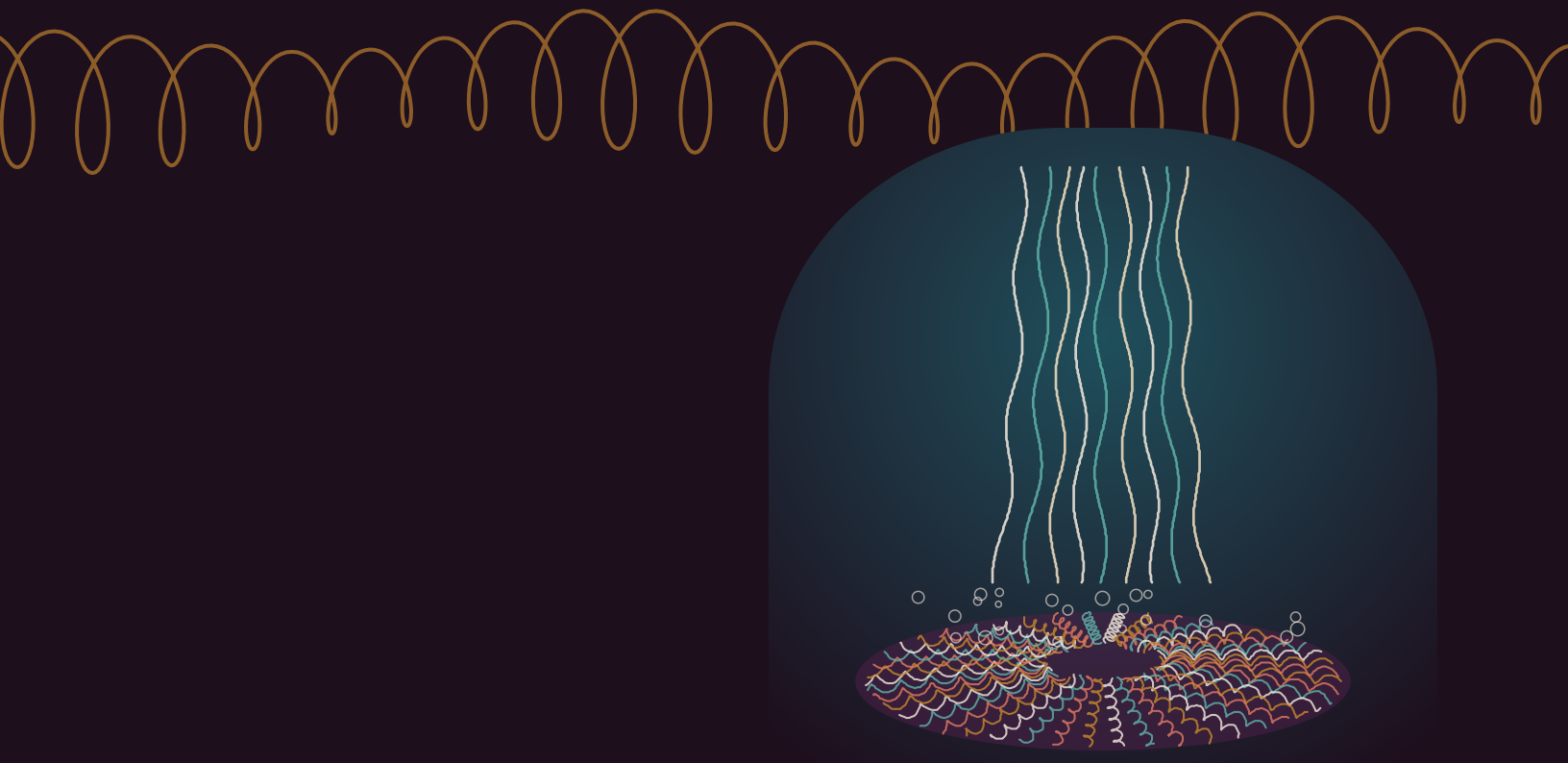
Wash-day setup

Build a calm wash station.

A long hose, a basin, a cart and something to look at. Here's how to set up wash day so the water comes to them, not the other way around.



Fewer tears start with the room.

Most wash-day fights are about water on the face, cold, and being stuck in one position. Fix the setup and half the battle is gone. Everything here screws together by hand and comes back off when you move.

Water safety first.

Set your water heater to 120°F or lower. Test the water on your wrist before it touches their head; warm, never hot. Never leave a child alone in or near water, even for a second, even in a basin.

Sources CPSC · Tap water scalds

Option A: the shower line

Shower fittings use standard threads, so each piece screws into the next in one line from the wall.

1. **Wall shower arm**
   The pipe coming out of your wall.
2. **Shower filter (optional)**
   Reduces chlorine. Doesn't soften water. See below.
3. **Swivel ball-joint mount**
   Lets you aim the hose bracket.
4. **8–10 ft hose**
   Replaces the standard 5 ft hose. This is the piece that changes everything.
5. **Handheld wand**
   Gentle, low-pressure spray you can pause.

Put it together in 15 minutes

01 **Turn the water off**
Shut the shower valve. Unscrew the old hose bracket or shower head from the arm by hand or with an adjustable wrench (wrap the jaws in a cloth so you don't scratch it). Wipe off old tape.

02 **Tape the threads**
Wrap thread-seal (Teflon) tape 3–4 times clockwise around the arm's threads, the same direction the next piece screws on.

03 **Add the filter, if you're using one**
Screw it onto the arm, hand-tight plus a little. Note the date on it; cartridges wear out.

04 **Add the swivel mount**
Screw it onto the filter's outlet (or straight onto the arm if you skipped the filter).

05 **Connect the long hose and wand**

Hose onto the mount, wand onto the other end. Each hose end has a washer inside; make sure it's seated.

06 **Test before the first wash**

Turn the water on slowly and check every joint for drips. Tighten a quarter-turn if needed. Then test the temperature on your wrist.

Option B: the sink-fed chair station

No shower arm handy, or washing in a reclining chair? Feed the water from the bathroom sink instead.

1. **Sink faucet + 3-way diverter**
   Replaces the aerator. The faucet still works normally; a side port feeds your hose.
2. **Inline filter (optional)**
   Screws onto the side port. Sink threads are usually M22/M24, so get the adapter that matches.
3. **10–15 ft hose**
   Lightweight and long enough to reach the chair without crossing a walkway.
4. **Sprayer wand with on/off**
   Stop the water at the chair, not at the sink.
5. **Drain hose**
   From the basin down to the shower or tub drain, or into a bucket you empty after.

The sink-line parts

Brass 3-way faucet diverter with adapter

Replaces the sink aerator: the faucet still works, and a side port feeds the hose.

See it on Amazon

Inline shower filter (optional)

Same chlorine job as on the shower. Sink threads are usually M22/M24, so you may need an adapter to ½-inch.

See it on Amazon

10–15 ft lightweight hose

Long enough to reach the chair without stretching across a walkway.

Search on Amazon

Sprayer wand with on/off

Lets you stop the water at the chair, not at the sink.

Search on Amazon

Corrugated drain hose

Carries rinse water from the basin to the shower or tub drain.

Search on Amazon

Store links are for convenience; we haven't tested every item, and prices change. Check the current listing before you buy.

What a shower filter can and can't do

A shower filter reduces chlorine. Most use KDF or vitamin C, and the NSF standard for shower filters covers chlorine only. That's it. Most do not soften water: removing calcium and magnesium takes a water softener, not a cartridge. And claims about removing chloramine are much shakier.

Does hard water hurt coily hair? A little. In studies, hair soaked in hard water came out about 7–8% weaker in two of them and no different in another. Minerals build up on the outside of the strand and make it feel stiff and dull. The fix that actually works is a clarifying or chelating shampoo every few weeks, then a deep conditioner.

So a filter is a nice-to-have, not a must-have. If you get one, pick one with a visible replacement indicator or mark the install date, because a used-up filter does nothing.

Why, and the fine print

Older guides claim shower filters "soften" water or stop breakage. The research doesn't support that. The chlorine reduction is real.

Sources Curl Centric · Hard water and curly hair (research roundup) · NewBeauty · Do filtered showerheads work? · Cleveland Clinic · How to protect your hair from chlorine

The water-line parts

SHOWER FILTER

PHILIPS inline shower filter (AWP1775)

Screws between the shower arm and the hose. KDF media to reduce chlorine.

See it on Amazon

SHOWER FILTER

Weddell Duo shower filter

Two-cartridge filter with NSF-certified chlorine reduction, per the maker.

See it on Amazon

SWIVEL MOUNT

Shower arm swivel ball-joint mount

Lets you aim the hose bracket. Make sure the threads are standard ½-inch.

Search on Amazon

LONG HOSE

10 ft stainless steel shower hose

Swaps a 5 ft hose for 8–10 ft of reach, so the water comes to the basin instead of your child coming to the water.

See it on Amazon

HANDHELD WAND

Handheld shower head with a gentle spray setting

Pick one with a soft, low-pressure setting and an on/off or pause button.

Search on Amazon

THREAD TAPE

Plumber's thread-seal (Teflon) tape

Three or four wraps on the threads stop drips.

Search on Amazon

Store links are for convenience; we haven't tested every item, and prices change. Check the current listing before you buy.

The station: value or premium

Pick one per row. Both tiers do the same job; premium just does it more comfortably.

	VALUE	PREMIUM
Washing basin	**Inflatable shampoo basin with drain hose** Lies flat with a built-in pillow; the hose carries water to the drain. See it on Amazon	**Portable salon shampoo bowl with stand** A firmer bowl on a stand with a soft neck rest. Search on Amazon
Rolling cart	**Mainstays slim 3-tier rolling cart** About 15 inches wide, so it fits a small bathroom. Products on top, tools below. See it on Walmart	**Pibbs D25 metal salon roller cart** Heavy metal frame with five drawers; the top holds a dryer base. See it on Amazon
Drip catch	**Collapsible plastic basin** Catches drips outside the shower and folds flat for storage. Search on Amazon	**Waterproof mat with a raised edge** Keeps the floor dry under the styling chair. Search on Amazon
Ceiling projector	**Merkury Innovations astronaut galaxy projector** Puts moving stars on the ceiling, so eyes stay up and water stays off the face. See it on Walmart	**Sega Toys Homestar Flux planetarium** A sharper, quieter star field for the same job. See it on Amazon
Clothes protection	**Scalpmaster vinyl shampoo cape** Waterproof cape to keep clothes dry; cinch it so it isn't tight on the neck. See it on Amazon	**Kids' satin hooded robe** Warm after the rinse; the satin hood is gentle on a damp hairline. Search on Amazon
Wash chair	**Foldable kids' shampoo chair with basin** Reclines with a padded neck rest over its own basin; folds flat. See it on Amazon	**Portable reclining shampoo chair** A sturdier recline for older kids and longer sessions. Search on Amazon

Store links are for convenience; we haven’t tested every item, and prices change. Check the current listing before you buy.

Make the basin a place they don’t mind

Eyes up, water down

A ceiling star projector gives them something to watch, which keeps their head tipped back and water off their face.

Warm the whole time

A cape keeps clothes dry. A warm towel or a satin-hooded robe right after the rinse stops the shivers.

Everything in reach

The rolling cart holds products in wash order. You never turn your back to grab something.

Their seat, their say

A pillow under the neck, a towel to hold, and the same pause word as always. Comfort is part of the routine.

Keep water out of their eyes

Two cheap tools take most of the fear out of rinsing. Use either one, or both together.

01 **A silicone shampoo visor**

Snap it on like a crown, sitting just above the eyebrows. When you rinse, the brim channels water back and out to the sides, away from eyes, nose and ears. Hands-free, so both your hands stay on the hair.

02 **A rinser cup with a soft rim**

Rest the soft edge flush against their forehead and pour slowly over the crown. The rim sends the water backward instead of down their face. Good on its own, or with the visor.

03 **Rinse low and slow**

Recline them, keep the sprayer pointed back toward the crown, and use a gentle stream. Wrist-test the water first, every time.

Why, and the fine print

No visor or cup keeps every drop off every time, so keep a dry washcloth in reach and the pause word in play.

The rinse tools

Adjustable silicone shampoo visor (ages ~1–12)

A soft crown that seals above the eyebrows; the brim sends rinse water back and to the sides. Snap sizing grows with them.

See it on Amazon

Munchkin Rinse shampoo rinser

A cup with a soft rim that rests on the forehead, so you pour the water back over the crown.

See it on Amazon

Store links are for convenience; we haven't tested every item, and prices change. Check the current listing before you buy.

A hooded dryer, used gently

MoKnowsHair adds gentle heat while she deep conditions, and a hooded dryer is the kid-friendly way to do it: 5–10 minutes on low, conditioner in, hair covered with a plastic cap. It helps the conditioner soak in, and it's handy for setting twists.

Same age rule as every heat tool on this site: under 3, use a warm towel over a plastic cap instead. From about 3, low setting only, short sessions, and only if they can sit still and tell you it's too warm. Check the air on your hand first.

Sources MoKnowsHair · My length retention regimen + tips

Hooded dryers

Hooded dryer

VALUE

Conair InfinitiPRO soft bonnet dryer

A soft fabric hood on a hose. Gentle, diffused warmth.

See it on Walmart

PREMIUM

Pibbs 514 Kwik Dri salon dryer (1100W)

Salon hood on a rolling stand for even warmth over braids and twists.

See it on Amazon

Store links are for convenience; we haven't tested every item, and prices change. Check the current listing before you buy.

Quiet ears and a covered hairline

Dryers are loud and kids notice. Earmuffs turn the RevAir or hooded dryer into background noise. Fit matters more than the brand: the cushions should surround the whole ear, with hair pulled out from under them, snug but not pressing.

A wide satin-lined or terry band over the hairline and the tops of the ears keeps warm air and splashes off the edges while you work.

Sources BANZ · Kids vs baby earmuffs

Earmuffs and hairline bands

Earmuffs

PREMIUM

BANZ earmuffs (Baby 0–2 or Kids 2+)

NRR 26 per the maker, in both sizes. Pick by age so the cushions surround the ear.

See it on Amazon

VALUE

PROTEAR kids earmuffs (NRR 25)

Adjustable band that grows with them.

See it on Amazon

Hairline band

PREMIUM

Wide satin-lined spa headband

Covers the hairline and the tops of the ears while the dryer runs.

Search on Amazon

VALUE

Wide terry cloth spa headband

Soaks up splashes and blocks warm air; machine washable.

Search on Amazon

Store links are for convenience; we haven't tested every item, and prices change. Check the current listing before you buy.

Lock it up: the childproof station

Beads, bobbles, clips and scissors are choking and cut hazards, and the dryer and oils are no toys either. Keep them in a cart with locking doors and lock it whenever you're not mid-session. Small parts go in a snap-shut box behind those doors, never loose on a counter or dresser. Keep the key on your key ring or somewhere high, never in the lock.

Sources CPSC · Small parts for toys and children's products

Lockable storage

OmySalon trolley with 2 lockable doors

Rolling station with doors that lock, drawers and a dryer holder.

See it on Amazon

Everything Mary 21-compartment bead box

Snap-shut box for beads, bobbles and clips; lives behind the locked doors.

See it on Amazon

Store links are for convenience; we haven't tested every item, and prices change. Check the current listing before you buy.

Later: a portable salon sink

If wash day moves out of the bathroom, a self-contained portable shampoo sink is the top-end option. It rolls on locking casters, has its own clean-water and wastewater tanks, and heats its own water. You fill the tank and plug it in; no plumbing.

Its heater can go much hotter than a child's rinse should be. Set it to warm, check it on your wrist every time, and keep the wastewater tank emptied so it never overflows.

Sources CPSC · Tap water scalds

The upgrade

Monsam PSE-2005S portable shampoo sink

A rolling cabinet with its own clean-water and wastewater tanks and a built-in heater. Plugs into a wall outlet; no plumbing.

See it on Amazon

Store links are for convenience; we haven't tested every item, and prices change. Check the current listing before you buy.

Supporting sources

Checked October 26, 2026. Source roles and limitations are part of these instructions.

CPSC · Tap water scalds · Date not displayed
https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/5098-Tap-Water-Scalds.pdf
Set water heaters to 120°F; at 140°F third-degree burns can happen in about six seconds; test water before bathing young children.

Curl Centric · Hard water and curly hair (research roundup) · Date not displayed
https://www.curlcentric.com/hard-water/
Summarizes studies: one found no strength difference, two found hard-water-soaked hair about 7–8% weaker; minerals collect in the cuticle. Chelating/clarifying shampoo helps; shower filters are not reliable softeners (NSF/ANSI 177 covers chlorine only).

NewBeauty · Do filtered showerheads work? · Date not displayed
https://www.newbeauty.com/view/do-filtered-showerheads-work-hair-skin
Cosmetic chemist: most showerhead filters are not water softeners; KDF reduces chlorine and some metals; vitamin C neutralizes chlorine; chloramine claims are less established.

Cleveland Clinic · How to protect your hair from chlorine · Date not displayed
https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-to-protect-your-hair-from-chlorine
Dermatologist: saturate hair with clean water first, add leave-in or oil, wear a cap, rinse right away, clarify occasionally (not daily), deep condition weekly.

MoKnowsHair · My length retention regimen + tips · August 8, 2024
https://moknowshair.com/blogs/news/lengthretentionregimen
Read in full on October 27, 2026: weekly wash day, scalp clarifier, deep conditioning as “the key element” (extra time with heat for low porosity), detangling with conditioner and a flexible brush, stylers on wet hair, hooded dryer, enclosed pineapple at night, trims about every four months, heat cut to about twice a year. Adult routine with her own product line; not pediatric clinical evidence.

BANZ · Kids vs baby earmuffs · Date not displayed
https://usa.banzworld.com/pages/kids-vs-baby-earmuffs-explore-banz-hearing-protection
Baby earmuffs newborn–2 years and Kids earmuffs 2–10+ years, both NRR 26 dB per the maker. Cushions must surround the ear, hair out from under them, snug not tight.

CPSC · Small parts for toys and children’s products · Date not displayed
https://www.cpsc.gov/Business--Manufacturing/Business-Education/Business-Guidance/Small-Parts-for-Toys-and-Childrens-Products
Federal small-parts rule: products for children under 3 may not contain parts small enough to be a choking hazard. Basis for keeping beads and bobbles away from under-3s.

Keep the routine close.

This guide lives online too, with every path, the full kit and the sources behind each step. Scan to open it on your phone.

thedadsystem.org/haircare/setup.html

The Dad System · Small systems. Deeper connection. General education, not medical advice; this guide has not been medically reviewed. Artwork is original and generated in code.