Habit Reversal Training

Purpose: To develop control of the *act of pulling* (not the urges to pull).

Awareness Training

Purpose: To recognize times or places where pulling is more likely to happen, such as in the car, before bed time, etc. And to learn to recognize when pulling is about to happen or is already happening, such as noticing pressure or tension sensations or noticing playing with hair.

Competing Response Training

Purpose: To have a go to tool to prevent pulling from happening when your child has an urge to pull or to stop pulling if your child has already started pulling. We will just use the word "exercise" to describe the competing response.

How to do the exercise?
Simply do the action decided on by your child and therapist (it is usually very simple, such as making fists, or putting hands to sides) for 1 full minute.

When to do the exercise?
Every time that your child has an urge to pull or notices that they have started pulling. Every single time. When the exercise is over, if they experience another urge, they should do the exercise again.

Our goal is to make this a habit that is used any time that your child has an urge to pull or catches themselves pulling. This takes lots and lots of practice and patience, but with time and persistence it will become natural and automatic.

Stimulus Control

Purpose: Simply put this is setting the stage to make pulling more difficult.

Examples of stimulus control:

- Removing hand held mirrors, tweezers, or other tools used to pull from the home (or placing them in your possession to request with your permission).
- Wear gloves or mittens OR hold an object (ball, stuffed animal, etc.) when doing things where pulling is likely to happen, such as watching TV, reading, or lying in bed.
- Set a timer to limit time spent in bathroom (or other pulling location).
- Set a timer that must be reset every 10 minutes when watching TV to help with awareness of automatic pulling.
- Remove bright lights or reduce lighting near mirrors where pulling happens.

These should be simple and easy to implement and consistently used but shouldn't take over your child's life.

They should not be used to try to stop urges or thoughts related to pulling from happening (we will learn that this is counterproductive in the long run). The urges to pull are okay. We are working on stopping the actual act of pulling.

Be creative and treat these as experiments. Try them for a few days and keep those that are helpful, discard those that aren't.

Homework

Use exercises. Every single time!
Begin using stimulus control plan

How you can help:

- Ask how you can best help to remember to use their exercise and the stimulus control.
- Stay positive and praise or reward your child when they do their exercise.
- Don't punish for not doing it.