

PDA Hygiene Routine Reset

One-page nervous system plan for calmer hygiene routines (PDA + AuDHD).

Why hygiene triggers PDA

- Sensory discomfort can feel unbearable
- Demand stacking (stop play → bathroom → steps)
- Feeling controlled = threat response

Parent nervous system first

- Slow voice + softer body = safety
- Drop urgency, drop lectures
- Lead the calm, not the debate

Anchor cue (no nagging)

- Use 1 cue: playlist, timer, visual card
- Let the cue do the talking
- Same cue daily builds predictability

Micro-steps (make it tiny)

- Rinse mouth counts
- Brush 20 seconds counts
- Wipe-down counts

Autonomy choices

- “Full version or easy version?”
- “Teeth now or after snack?”
- Offer limited choices only

Sensory-friendly swaps

- Warm towel instead of shower
- Different toothpaste / flavor
- Headphones during hygiene

Body doubling

- Sit nearby, quiet presence
- No reminders while they start
- Praise effort, not compliance

Emergency unstick plan

- One step only: “Stand in bathroom.”
- “Easy version today.”
- Try again later without punishment