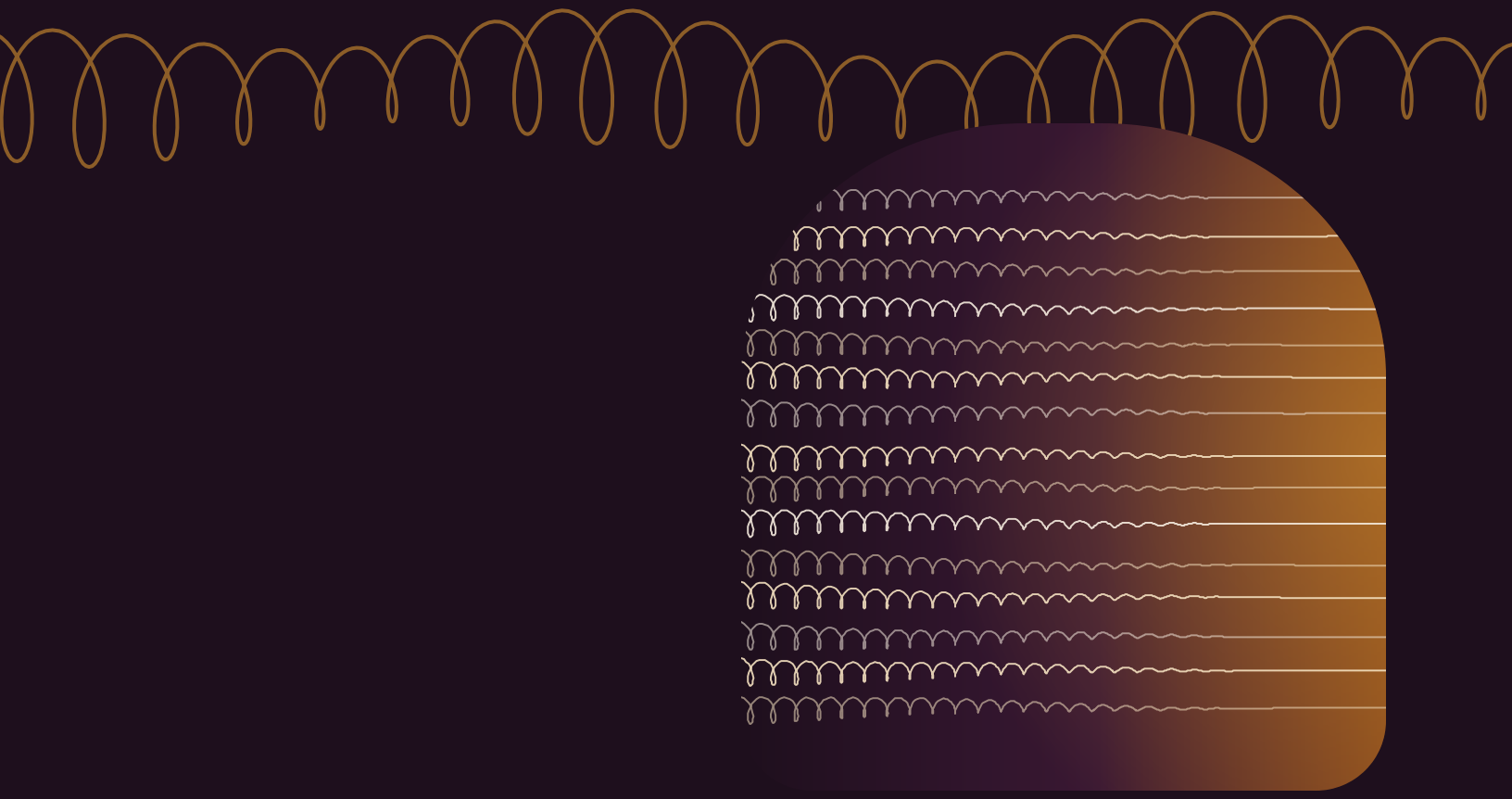
Choose your path

Heat is a choice. Not a milestone.

Silk presses and blowouts, done occasionally and done carefully. Here’s how to prep, protect, keep it and go back to curls. No promises of zero damage.



Decide first. Temperature comes later.

Under 3: no heat. Air dry, or a RevAir on its cool setting. From about 3, once the hair has real length and they can sit still and tell you to stop, low-heat drying (RevAir on its low setting) is an option. Flat irons and silk presses stay off the table for young kids. For anyone, wait if the hair is breaking, the scalp is sore, or the chemical history is unclear.

Why, and the fine print

No birthday and no product label makes a temperature universally safe. That's why this guide never gives one.

MoKnowsHair, who silk presses herself, cut her pressing to about twice a year to protect her curls. Occasional really means occasional.

Sources AAD · Teaching your child healthy hair care habits · AAD · Tips for healthy hair · MoKnowsHair · My length retention regimen + tips · RevAir · FAQs · AAP · Electric hair styling products a common cause of burn injuries in children

DECISION MAP

Should we use heat?

A decision before a temperature. The answer is often “not yet.”

Q1 How old are they?

Under 3

No heat yet.
Air dry, or use a RevAir on its cool (O) setting to dry and stretch. Twists, plaits and puffs need no heat at all.

RevAir with kids

About 3 to 7

Low-heat drying only.
A RevAir on low heat (I, about 158°F) and low tension, short sessions, with ear protection. No flat irons or silk presses at this age.

The kid settings

8 and up, teen or adult

Q2 Any breaking, a sore scalp, or chemical history you’re unsure of?

Yes

Postpone the heat.
Sort out the breakage or the scalp first, and get the chemical history clear. Heat on fragile or processed hair is where damage starts.

Why the decision comes first

No

Q3 Can they sit still safely and tell you “stop”?

Yes

Occasional heat, done carefully.
Clean, conditioned hair. A heat protectant made for that tool. Lowest effective setting, no repeated passes. Stop at burning, smoke or pain.

The occasional heat route

Not really

Not today.
If they can’t stay put or speak up, the appliance waits. Choose a stretched no-heat style.

No-heat finishes

Drying, stretching and pressing are three different jobs

A dryer removes water. A blowout adds tension to stretch the hair. A silk press adds a flat iron to straighten it. A great dryer doesn't mean you need an iron.

A regular flat iron only goes on fully dry hair. Wet-to-dry tools are their own category with their own directions, so don't borrow their claims for a regular iron. Follow the labels on the exact tool and protectant.

Sources AAD · Tips for healthy hair

The occasional heat route

01 **Tell the stylist everything**
Relaxers, texturizers, color, bleach, past heat damage, scalp issues, reactions. Then ask straight out: would waiting be the better call?

02 **Start clean, conditioned and detangled**
Wash and deep condition first, without a heavy stack of oils and gels. Put a heat protectant made for the tool on while the hair is still wet, before the blow-dry. Not every leave-in protects against heat.

03 **Dry with control**
A comfortable setting, airflow moving, as the manual says. Ceramic tools spread heat more evenly on textured hair. An adult runs the appliance around a child. Cords and tools stay away from water.

04 **Fewer passes, not more heat**
Don't keep going over a section chasing bone-straight. Even the lowest setting carries risk, and a protectant's "up to" temperature isn't a target.

05 **Keep it without reheating**
A loose wrap or another low-tension setup at night. A satin scrunchie for a loose gather. Let a little texture come back instead of re-pressing the edges every day.

06 **Wash, then check**
Wash when it needs it. If the curl pattern stays changed or the hair breaks after washing, pause heat and get it assessed.

Why, and the fine print

A deep conditioner or mask can't guarantee the original curl pattern comes back. Heat damage is why "occasional" matters.

Sources AAD · Black hair: tips for everyday care · AAD · Tips for healthy hair · Society for Pediatric Dermatology · Curly/coily hair care · MoKnowsHair · Tips to avoid heat damage

Practice still happens

Before

A loose, secure style that works with the sport. A clean sweatband if it’s comfortable and fits the gear. Don’t wrap it tight to “sweat-proof” the press.

After

Blot, don’t scrub. Take off damp bands and let the roots dry. A cool, low blow-dry is an option for older kids and adults, not a must for a toddler.

When it reverts

Go to a simple style or wash and reset. Don’t flat-iron damp roots. And never skip a needed wash, or skip the game, to save a press.

Sources MoKnowsHair · My length retention regimen + tips

Burning means stop.

Burning, scalp pain, smoke, a singed smell or sudden breakage: stop the service now. A skin burn needs medical advice, not a cosmetic “repair” treatment.

Supporting sources

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

AAD · Teaching your child healthy hair care habits · Date not displayed
https://www.aad.org/public/everyday-care/hair-scalp-care/hair/hair-care-habits
Child-focused gentle handling and swimming guidance; not a trial of this family routine.

AAD · Tips for healthy hair · Updated August 12, 2024
https://www.aad.org/public/everyday-care/hair-scalp-care/hair/healthy-hair-tips
General care principles. Individual scalp conditions can require a different plan.

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.

RevAir · FAQs · Date not displayed
https://myrevair.com/pages/faqs
Maker says it is safe for kids because no heat blows on the scalp, face or neck. Heat I ≈ 158°F, II ≈ 220°F, O = no-heat cool shot. Tension 1–7; start at 3 and II for adults; lower tension if it tangles. No minimum age or child settings given.

AAP · Electric hair styling products a common cause of burn injuries in children · 2023
https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/conference-news-releases/electric-hair-styling-products-common-cause-of-burn-injuries-in-children/
ER data 2013–2022: about 68% of styling-tool burns were in children 10 and under (median age 4.3); curling irons and curlers caused 97.4%.

AAD · Black hair: tips for everyday care · Date not displayed
https://www.aad.org/public/everyday-care/hair-scalp-care/hair/care-african-american
General Black-hair guidance, not a toddler-specific trial or a universal schedule.

Society for Pediatric Dermatology · Curly/coily hair care · Published 2021
https://pedsderm.net/site/assets/files/1028/spd_edi_curly-coily-hair_bw_pub.pdf
Two-page specialty handout, read including both page images. Includes broad care suggestions, not evidence that a precise heat temperature or routine is risk-free.

MoKnowsHair · Tips to avoid heat damage · Date not displayed
https://moknowshair.com/blogs/news/tipstoavoidheatdamage
Thermal protectant on wet hair before blow-drying and pressing; ceramic tools for textured hair; damage severity decides whether to treat, grow out or cut. Promotes FHI Heat tools; no temperatures given.



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/heat.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.