

BEST BEGINNINGS STARS TO QUALITY

HAND WASHING PROCEDURE

Children and staff members should wash their hands using the following method:

1. Check to be sure a clean, disposable paper (or single-use cloth) towel is available;
 2. Turn on clean, running water to a comfortable temperature (1);
 3. Moisten hands with water and apply soap (not antibacterial) to hands;
 4. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears, hands are out of the water stream, and continue for at least twenty seconds (sing Happy Birthday silently twice) (2). Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands. Nails should be kept short; acrylic nails should not be worn (3);
 5. Rinse hands under clean, running water that is at a comfortable temperature until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands;
 6. Dry hands with the clean, disposable paper or single use cloth towel;
 7. If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with a disposable paper or single use cloth towel;
 8. Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined trash container; or place single-use cloth towels in the laundry hamper; or hang individually labeled cloth towels to dry. Use hand lotion to prevent chapping of hands, if desired.
- Situations/times that children and staff should wash their hands should be posted in all handwashing areas.
 - Use of antimicrobial soap is not recommended in child care settings. There are no data to support use of antibacterial soaps over other liquid soaps.
 - Children and staff who need to open a door to leave a bathroom or diaper changing area should open the door with a disposable towel to avoid possibly re-contaminating clean hands. If a child cannot open the door or turn off the faucet, they should be assisted by an adult.

Rationale

Running clean water over the hands removes visible soil. Wetting the hands before applying soap helps to create a lather that can loosen soil. The soap lather loosens soil and brings it into solution on the surface of the skin. Rinsing the lather off into a sink removes the soil from the hands that the soap brought into solution. Acceptable forms of soap include liquid and powder.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers do not kill norovirus and spore-forming organisms which are common causes of diarrhea in child care settings (4). This is sufficient reason to limit or even avoid the use of hand sanitizers with infants and toddlers (children less than 2 years of age) because they are the age group at greatest risk of spreading diarrheal disease due to frequent diaper changing. Hand washing is the preferred method. However, while hand sanitizers are not recommended for children under the age of 2, they are not prohibited.