



Hand Washing Procedure

Use the following method to make sure hands are as germ free as possible. The process of thoroughly washing and rinsing hands should take 10 – 15 seconds. This can be achieved by slowly counting to 10 when washing and then slowly counting to 10 when rinsing. This is about as long as it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday' twice

- Wet hands with running water
- Use liquid soap and spread over hands, including backs of hands, between fingers and up to wrists
- Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them
- Rinse your hands thoroughly to remove all suds and germs. Thorough rinsing will help prevent dermatitis from suds
- Turn off the tap using paper towel
- Pat dry your hands with a new paper towel
- Hand hygiene takes time. In the steps for good hand washing, it is necessary to slowly count to 10 while soaping and rubbing hands and then slowly counting to 10 while rinsing hands. Teachers should allow enough time in the preschool daily program for children to wash and dry their hands well.

Teach the children to wash and dry their hands in this way. Staff need to supervise and observe children so that they develop hand washing as a good habit and do it properly. Encourage children not to touch the tap after they have washed and dried their hands. The tap will have lots of germs on it.

Liquid soap is advocated rather than solid bar soap because it is less likely to become contaminated and is more likely to be used. If reusable containers are used for liquid soap, they must be cleaned and dried before refilling with fresh soap. Antibacterial hand washes should not be used routinely in child care centres as they are unnecessary and may encourage the development of resistant bacteria. Alcohol-based hand cleaners can have a role if proper hand washing facilities are not available (e.g. on excursions). After several uses of an alcohol-based hand cleaner, you will need to wash your hands properly with liquid soap and water.

Effective **hand drying** is just as important as thorough hand washing because wet surfaces transfer germs more effectively than dry ones. Disposable paper towel is the ACT Education and Training Directorate's acceptable option. Cloth towels must not be used as they allow re-contamination of the hands and cannot guarantee that children only use their own towel. Warm air dryers are also not recommended as they take longer to dry hands than with paper towel, can only serve one person at a time and often people do not spend long enough using the dryer.

Gloves. Wearing gloves does not replace the need for hand washing as gloves may have very small holes or be torn during use. Hands may also become contaminated during removal of gloves. New gloves should be used for each child.

Disposable gloves will be worn during:

- Food Preparation
- First aid procedures
- Toileting
- Nappy change
- Handling body fluids
- Washing soiled clothing
- Nose wiping.

Wash hands thoroughly with soap and cool running water and then dry thoroughly after the above procedures and before and after food preparation and meal times.

When staff should wash their own hands

- On arrival to the preschool. This reduces the introduction of germs
- Before handling food
- Before eating
- After changing a nappy
- After removing gloves
- After going to the toilet
- After cleaning up blood, faeces or vomit
- After wiping a nose, either a child's or your own
- Before giving medication
- After handling garbage
- After coming in from outside play
- Before going home. This prevents taking germs home

When should children wash the their hands

- On arrival to preschool. This reduces the introduction of germs
- Before and after eating and handling food
- After having their nappy changed. Their hands will become contaminated while they are on the change mat
- After going to the toilet
- After coming in from outside play
- After touching nose secretions
- After coming in contact with blood, faeces or vomit
- Before going home. This prevents taking germs home. Parents can help with this

Reviewed June 2018