

## I Can Wash My Hands, With Only a Little Help!

When your child washes his hand by himself (with help), he is:

- Showing you he wants to do things on his own
- Enjoying the feeling of the soap and water
- Learning to follow a routine
- Learning that clean hands are important for good health

### Ideas to try with your child:

- Hand washing is the most important thing we can do to stay healthy. Put a stepstool by the sink so your child can reach the water, soap and towel. Antibacterial soap is not recommended.
- **A simple routine:** Turn warm water on; have child wet hands; put soap on hands and start rubbing hands together while singing “Happy Birthday to you!” two times OR the “ABC song” once. Rinse hands and dry with towel.
- Always wash hands: before and after eating; after using the bathroom (or having diaper changed); after playing with pets; after coming in from outside or when hands are dirty.

### If your child is struggling:

- Allow a little extra time for playing in the water. Talk about why we wash hands (to wash germs off).
- Let him do as much as he can by himself.

### Going further:

- Read a story about hand washing such as : Wash Your Hands! By Tony Ross, or Germs Are Not for Sharing, by Elizabeth Verdick.

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children in Ages 16-36 months** that parents can help improve at home.



Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: “Wash and dry hands, with only a little help needed.” *Growing Up Healthy, Ages 16-36 months*, pg. 47