

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