

National Center on Deaf-Blindness



Transition Activities

Hand Wash Helper

Topic:

Hand Wash Helper can help your child know the people he/she needs to get things done, emphasizing self-management.

Overview:

We all count on other people to help us with specific things in our lives. Who you go to if you have a flat tire might be different than who you go to for a new recipe. This activity combines self-management skills with your child's knowledge of and preference for the people who help make them happen. It broadens your child's ability to ask for help with specific tasks from more than one person, and eventually know "who to ask for what". This connection between people and their "uses" translates to the work place making us more efficient in solving problems or getting something accomplished.

You can substitute a different routine task, but the one chosen for this activity is hand washing, because, let's face it, probably no one washes their hands in the way prescribed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

This is what is suggested:

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Outcomes for your child's transition development:

Your child's self-determination begins with the knowledge of himself/herself (his/her strengths, areas of need, preferences, options.) Self-determination expands through age, experiences, and development.

The outcomes for this activity are for your child to learn concepts about self (the beginning of self-determination) – *I know the people I need and I can choose/ask for help. I participate in taking care of myself; I participate in keeping my body fit, I can do things.*

Activity Directions:

Prior to starting the activity, it would help you as the parent to learning the song but maybe one more relevant than “Happy Birthday.”

Who is the person in your home that helps your child with hand washing? You may already have a set routine for hand washing, in which case, don’t change your routine but add additional people that know the routine so that your child can choose her helper.

Hand washing not the best choice for your child? Choose any routine task and implement the principles.

1. Choose one or two additional people in your household to learn the hand washing routine your child uses.
2. If your child responds to music and rhythm, try adding this song to the routine. Sung to the tune of Frere Jacques: “Top and bottom, top and bottom; In between, in between; scrub them all together, scrub them all together; Now they’re clean, Squeaky clean.” (Sometimes adding a song makes it more fun for the adult...whose positive aspect will benefit your child, even if your child cannot hear the song.)
3. Begin asking your child who he/she would like to help him/her with hand washing any time it is required, convenient and in the context of daily routines.

Ways to either Simplify or Increase Complexity:

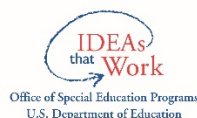
Ideas for Simplifying Activity

- This activity is less about handwashing and more about giving your child ways to choose a helper during daily routines. “Do you want mom to take you to the park, or DADDY!” “Do you want to sit on the porch with Sissy or Grandpa?” “Who do you want to help you carve your pumpkin?”
- Play a game of “who helps you . . .” Use routine activities and routine people. Provide an accessible way for your child to respond based on his/her communication strengths.
- Try to read your child’s preferences for people; provide engagement opportunities for your child with that person and give language/communication prompts such as, “You like to read stories with Grandma.”
 - A simple concept to reinforce is: I like; I don’t Like. This makes me “happy” or “no thank you.”

Ideas for Increasing the Complexity of the Activity

- Teach the song to your child using the communication method that is most effective.
- Teach signs for the words and sign together as the washing proceeds.
- Use this activity to teach these concepts: top, bottom, in between, dirty, clean.

- When giving choices for helpers, throw in a silly suggestion, “Can a giraffe help you wash your hands?”
- If your child asks for help from someone who is unable to give it, explain why another person must be chosen, “Sissy can’t watch you at the park. She is not old enough to make sure you are safe.” “Grandma is busy today. Please choose someone who is in the house right now.”



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