

Handwashing Procedures Video Transcript

The following video is provided by Child Care Aware.

As childcare providers, we care about the children entrusted to us every day and their families. One of the best things we can do to reduce the risk of gastrointestinal and other infections is to wash our hands thoroughly and properly throughout the day. In fact, frequent hand washing is one of the most effective ways of reducing the spread of infections in childcare programs and everywhere else.

According to national health and safety performance standards, childcare programs that implement proper hand washing procedures, reduce the incidence of diarrheal illness by 50%. Other studies have shown a reduction in respiratory infections when frequent proper handwashing was implemented.

So, when should we wash our hands? According to Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, children, staff, and all visitors should wash their hands upon arrival for the day, after breaks, and when moving from one classroom to another.

We should also wash our hands both before and after activities like eating, giving medication, and diapering. Hand washing is also needed after activities like using the toilet, cleaning, and handling garbage.

So, what's the proper procedure for washing our hands to reduce the risk of infections in our programs? Here's how. Start by checking to make sure that a clean, disposable paper or single use cloth towel is available. Next, turn on warm water and moisten your hands with water. Now it's time to apply soap, use liquid or foam soap only. Rub your hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears. Do this away from the flow of water for 20 seconds. That's about the length of the Happy Birthday song, sung two times in a row without rushing. While rubbing cover all parts of both your hands including the areas between your fingers, around your nail beds, under your fingernails, under any jewelry, and the back of your hands. Nails should be kept short. Acrylic nails should not be worn. Once you have thoroughly applied soap, rinse your hands free of soap and dirt under running water. Dry your hands with a clean disposable paper towel or a single-use cloth towel, or dry with a blower. Turn off the faucet using the paper towel or a single-use cloth towel. Your program may have an automatic sink, if it does you can skip this step.

Finally, throw the used paper towel into a hands-free, plastic-lined trash can or put the single-use towel into a laundry hamper. Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is an acceptable alternative to soap and water hand washing if hands are not visibly soiled. Hand sanitizer should only be used by adults and children over 24 months of age. Use only a single pump and spread it all over all parts of your hands and fingers. Allow your hands to air dry. This may seem like a lot of time to invest in hand washing but the reality is, taking these steps will reduce the number of infections in your child care program and fewer infections means healthier, happier children, families, and providers.

****Transcript developed by Successful Solutions****