

HANDWASHING AT HOME

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What can I do to prevent the problem behavior of avoiding handwashing?

BELOW ARE TOOLS TO TEACH HOW TO WASH HANDS:

- Get a book about washing hands -- Go to your local library or book store, get a book about washing hands, read it with your child, and then suggest to your child that he/she can make his/her own "washing hands book" using real photos. Take photographs, develop pictures, and staple several pieces of paper together to make a book for your child by gluing in the photographs and writing the steps of hand washing in the book. Read your homemade book to your child prior to going into the bathroom, and allow him/her to read it to you.
- Show the steps -- Use wash hands visual routine sequence to cue steps. Use photographs of each step of the hand washing routine. If the pictures are laminated and Velcroed, your child can remove the picture, or turn the picture over to indicate completion.
- Back up hand washing with something fun -- Tell your child he/she can do something fun after hand washing.
- Make it fun -- decorate sink area with your child's favorite characters.
- Sing a song -- Sing a fun song about washing hands to encourage child to wash.
- Encourage your child -- Praise for all attempts at washing hands.
- Make sure your child can comfortably reach the sink using a step stool.
- Use pump soap in a decanter if that will be more interesting or fun for your child, or use some scented soap.
- Let your child play in the sink after washing hands.

Why might my child be doing this?

Your child does not want to wash hands.

What can I do if the problem behavior occurs?

- Say to your child, "I will help you. You turn on the water; I will get soap."
- Use a first-then cue: first wash hands; then ____.
- Count with your child how many more steps, or count how many times they need to rub his/her hands together, e.g., "O.K. put soap on, now rub 1-2-3" make it fun or silly.
- Remind your child of something fun he/she can do after hand washing.
- Praise for completing each step.
- Praise for washing hands.