

## HANDWASHING: 18 Months-3 Years



According to the CDC, one of the best ways to prevent flu and coronavirus is by practicing proper hand hygiene.

### When Should Children Wash Their Hands?

- After using the bathroom
- After coming inside from playing outside
- Before touching their eyes, nose, or mouth
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose
- Before and after eating or handling food
- After touching a pet or animal



In order to support your child with learning how to independently wash their hands you can break down handwashing into chronological steps. Through the practice of modeling you can focus on teaching them one step at a time. For example, demonstrate the action of scrubbing your hands while saying, "Scrub your hands." Additionally, you can use hand-over-hand assistance to support your child with completing a step such as assisting them with rubbing their hands together. If your child is unable to independently reach the sink hold him or her to help him reach the sink. If your child can stand, use a safety step to lift them up to the faucet. Remember, it will take time for young children to get into the habit of washing their hands and they may require reminders throughout the day.



### **Washing Hands: Step-By-Step**

- Turn on the faucet. Use warm (not hot) water. Remaining mindful that you will need to monitor the temperature of the water due to comfort and safety.
- Wet hands using the running water
- Put soap on hands
- Scrub hands, front and back, together for 20-seconds
- Rinse hands under running water removing all the soap for 10-seconds
- Turn off the faucet
- Dry hands with a clean towel



### Fun Ways to Encourage Children to Wash their Hands

- **Use colored or scented liquid soap:** Let them pick which soap they want to use.
- **Sing a song:** You can sing Happy Birthday twice, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, or create your own 20-second handwashing song, such as "This is the Way we Wash Our Hands" sung to the tune of Mulberry Bush.
- **Sticker chart:** Hang a sticker chart in the bathroom and give a happy face or star each time they wash their hands.
- **Use a washable marker:** Make a happy face on the back of their hands with the marker and encourage them to wash their hands until it disappears.
- **Read Books about Handwashing:** *Germs are not for Sharing* by Elizabeth Verdick, *Superheroes Wash their Hands* by Katie Button, *Wash, Wash, Wash* by Pamela Chanko

