

Hand Washing

Head Start Performance Standards

§ 1302.47 (b) (6)

Policy

Head Start understands the importance of routine hand washing as one of the most important methods of preventing illness in early childhood education settings. All staff, volunteers, visitors and children will follow Head Start hand washing procedures. Proper hand washing is required upon arrival for the day, after changing diapers, using the toilet, helping a child use the toilet, handling any bodily fluids, using a tissue for either your own or a child's nasal secretions, coughing or sneezing into your hands, handling pets or animals, after outdoor activities, playing in sandboxes and cleaning or handling the garbage. Hand washing will also take place before and after eating, handling food, feeding a child, toothbrushing and giving medication according to Head Start Performance Standards and licensing regulations.

Hand Washing Procedure

Hand washing will consist of these steps:

1. Have everything ready: liquid soap, water, paper towels.
2. Turn on warm running water.
3. Lather the fronts and backs of hands, under fingernails, and between the fingers for at least twenty seconds (about as long as it takes to sing the "ABC song").
4. Rinse off all soap under running water; let water run from wrists to fingertips.
5. Dry hands with a paper towel.
6. Turn the faucet off with the paper towel to avoid picking up germs on the faucet.
7. Drop the paper towel into the trash can.

Additional Guidelines

- All adults and children entering a site are required to wash their hands.
- All Head Start sites will have hand washing information posted above each sink.
- Infants' and children's hands will be washed with soap and warm running water after each diaper change.
- When hand washing is not possible, e.g. on field trips when no running water is available, hand sanitizer with >60% alcohol will be available for use by children and staff for cleaning hands until hand washing with soap and running water can occur. Hand sanitizer must be kept out of the reach of children and used only under adult supervision.
- Hand washing will be included in the classroom curriculum. Please contact the Health Services Supervisor if you need assistance with this.