

# Curriculum Ideas for Exploring Handwashing



By Cathy Abraham, MEd

*childcarediva@aol.com*

# Handwashing!



**Curriculum Goal** – To assist children in developing healthy habits, and to give them an appreciation for, and an understanding of, the benefits of handwashing.

## Vocabulary:

- Germs
- Anti-bacterial
- Bacteria
- Disinfect
- Clean
- Sanitary
- Unsanitary
- Illness
- Hygiene
- Healthy



## Concepts:

- Germs and sickness can be spread by people, especially when they do not wash their hands
- Handwashing helps cut down on germs and illness (getting sick)
- It is important to wash hands after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose

## Sensory Table Ideas:

Add water to the sensory with bubbles.

## Art Activities:

- Draw with a bar of soap on a dark piece of paper
- Bubble Art. Add a drop of food coloring to bubbles. Children then blow bubbles directly over their paper. As bubbles pop, they will create a design; *Or* Blow bubbles into a cup, using a straw. When bubbling over the top, lay a piece of paper on top of the cup. Bubbling will make a design on paper.
- Trace and cut out hands. Cut out a rectangle shape to glue on as a bar of “soap”
- Have children create/draw a picture of a bad germ
- Make a handprint collage
- Children can draw a face on a paper plate. Children can trace and cut out one hand. Children can glue a tissue over the “nose”, held by the “hand” glued on
- Make bubble wands by bending craft/pipe cleaners
- “Dirty Hands” Children trace and cut out hands. Brush thinned glue over “hands”, then shake on sand (or cornmeal, etc); *Or* Sponge paint brown paint onto “hands”
- Fingerprint Art!
- Make prints with bubble wands. Dip wands into paint and press onto paper.
- Children can draw pictures of the handwashing steps. Post.
- Fingerprint with mud! *Allow children to explore the sensory aspect*



**Community Time:** (“Circle Time”/“Group Time”)



**Monday:** Take dictation from the children on a large sheet of paper, writing their responses to the question: “What do we know about germs?” (Display finished chart)

**Tuesday:** Ask and discuss: “Why is it important to wash our hands?”

**Wednesday:** Ask/write responses: “When are times you should wash your hands?”

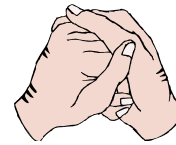
**Thursday:** Ask and discuss: “What kinds of things can bad germs do?”

**Friday:** Review - “What did we learn this week about germs and handwashing?”

*Follow with books, songs and fingerplays related to the curriculum theme, handwashing. Let the children know what their choices are for the morning, and what activities are new in the classroom for the day. Dismiss the group a few at a time in fun, creative ways that reinforce thematic concepts.*

**Math Activities:**

- Count to 20 while washing hands.
- “How Many Fingers Am I Holding Up?” game
- Estimate how many pumps of soap there are in a container of liquid soap
- Measure paper towel segments from a roll. How much do we need? *Discuss waste.*



**Home/School Connection Ideas:**

- Include parents in the learning theme for the week, and let them know that the children are learning about handwashing by sending a note home.

**Science Area Enrichment:**

Bring in a real microscope, if you can locate one, to magnify and look at germs. Also – bring in a black light (or black light bulb) to illustrate how some things are only visible under certain types of light; Look at fingerprints with a magnifying glass.

**Science Concepts/Activities:**

- **Germs!** Have your children take a piece of bread and wipe their hands on it. Take it into places that germs typically hide (bathrooms, sinks, diaper changing stations, etc) and also rub the bread there. Then put the bread in a baggie, and place it in the science area, where the children can watch the germs grow on the bread. Chart.

**Soap Floats!** Hypothesize, chart guesses, observe, discuss, research how and why

**Prop Box Ideas/Dramatic Play Enrichments:**

Add empty liquid soap bottles and hand towels for children to incorporate handwashing into their play. Make “bars of soap” by writing the word “soap” on rectangle blocks.

**Movement and Motor:**

- Have children do creative movement pretending to be bad germs... light, floating bubbles... that gooey, sticky stuff is on the floor... etc.
- “Germ Tag”. Have the person that is “it” be a bad germ. Whoever he catches and touches is “out” (tagged person has caught bad germs!)



### Playground/Walk Activities:

- After coming in from outside, have children smell and look at their hands before washing them. Discuss how hands get dirty while outside, etc.

### Block Area

Have a block washing activity; Talk about rectangle blocks – like bars of soap

### Teacher Made Enrichment Ideas:

- Make Wave Bottles. Fill clear, plastic water bottles with water and bubbles. Secure tightly and permanently shut with Superglue or a hot gluegun.
- Make a copy of the rebus chart included of the handwashing steps. Laminate or cover with contact paper. Cut into sections. Have children put in the correct order of steps, using sequencing skills.
- Make a clean/dirty classifying activity (pics of items that are clean or dirty looking)

### Supplemental Learning Ideas/Activities:

- Children draw a face on a paper plate, and cut a small whole in the mouth area. Place a spray bottle filled with water into the hole, “sneeze” i.e. spray. This can show children how germs are spread and what happens when you sneeze.
- How germs are spread...Sit in a large circle and put glitter on your hands. Explain that we are pretending the glitter is germs. Then shake a child's hand and say "look, she got my germs." The child then shake's someone else's hand, etc. You then choose one child to go wash their hands, but do not dry with a paper towel yet, and come show the class (not all glitter should be gone yet). Then have them dry hands and show the class again, etc... Watch germs (glitter) spread. (*Or fill/pop balloon*)
- Coughing Illustration. “Cough”, put a glob of washable paint in the palm of your hand to show where the germs go - even when you cover my mouth when you cough. Then offer to hold someone's hand, (and of course they don't want to) Pick up a pair of scissors, a book, any number of (washable) things to show how the paint (germs) are spreading, even as you put the object down. Encourage children to cough/sneeze into their elbow or shoulders if they can't get to a tissue in time.
- Blow Bubbles! Have contests – biggest, the most in a row, highest, lasts longest...
- Compare the smells of several soaps. *Variation: Can match scents (if 2 of each)*
- Place rebus charts (pictures to go with the words) by the sinks. Children can then “read” the posters, and actually see what to do – and the steps of handwashing.
- Bring in “Black Light” to show some things can only be seen under different light
- Cut up the included pictures of “When to Wash” and play “What’s Missing?” by having children guess which one you have taken away; *Or* Sequence the steps
- Have children trace/cut out their hand. Ask children when they should wash hands. Write one of their answers on each “finger” of their hand cut-out.
- Play a game like “Hot Potato” with a bar of soap. (*Can also use as a transition – person who “gets” the soap can go wash hands for lunch or snack*)
- Let children “write” or draw with a bar of soap on glass (or on a mirror)
- Children can bend pipecleaners to make bubble wands
- Ask and list responses: “How are other ways we wash things?”
- Make up and act out a puppet show about handwashing or about dirty hands
- Research and learn more about germs!
- Create a Venn Diagram, comparing/contrasting handwashing and tooth brushing – with commonalities overlapping in the center of the 2 circles



**Supplies needed for activities/projects:**

- Construction paper, paint and crayons
- Glue
- Playdough ingredients (flour, salt, oil)
- Large sheets of easel paper (dictation)
- Soap – bars and liquid
- Bubbles
- Paper plates
- Glitter



**Cover that cough!**

**Homemade Liquid Soap**

Soap slivers (from small bars of soap, almost gone)

Water

Bleach

*Rinse soap ends. Soak soap ends in water for a few days. As they dissolve, shake or stir. Add a drop of bleach for sanitation.*

**Bulletin Board Ideas:**

*“Wash Those Hands!”*

*“Healthy Habits!”*

*“A-choosing Good Hygiene”*

Put up pictures of children washing hands

*“Nothing to Sneeze At!”*

Make a display board illustrating what children learned/did on topic

*“Hands Down – Great Art!”*

**Soap Balls**

Shredded bars of soap or Ivory Soap Flakes, Water

*Mix small amount of water with soap. Shape and let dry.*

**Soap Bubbles**

1 cup water

2 T. liquid detergent

1 T. glycerin

½ tsp. Sugar

*Mix all ingredients. Use bubble wands to blow bubbles.*



# Songs and Fingerplays about Handwashing

## Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands

Wash, wash, wash your hands  
Wash them nice and clean  
Wash them on top,  
Wash them on bottom and fingers in between.  
Wash, wash, wash your hands  
Wash them nice and clean  
Wash them on top,  
Wash them on bottom and fingers in between.  
Washing Hands Song  
Tops and Bottoms, tops and bottoms,  
In between, in between,  
All around your hands, all around your hands,  
Makes them clean. Makes them clean  
All around, all around



## This Is The Way We Wash Our Hands

This is the way we wash our hands  
Wash our hands  
Wash our hands  
This is the way we wash our hands  
To keep our bodies healthy

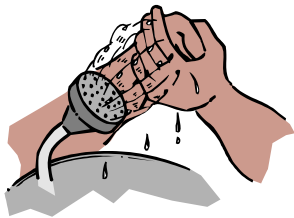
## Two Little Hands

2 little hands  
so clean and so bright!  
This is my left  
and this is my right!

## Wash Wash Wash Your Hands

*(Tune of Row Row Row Your Boat)*

Wash, wash, wash your hands.  
Wash them nice and clean.  
Wash them on top, wash them on bottom  
and fingers in between!



## Tops and Bottoms

*Tune: Frere Jaque*

Tops and Bottoms, Tops and Bottoms, (*Rub top and bottom of hands*)  
In between, In between, (*Rub fingers inside on both hands*)  
All around your hands, All around your hands, (*Just like it says*)  
Makes them clean. Makes them clean. (*Flash all ten fingers*)  
All around, All around



## Hand Washing Song

*Tune: Wheels on the Bus.*



The soap on your hands goes sud, sud, sud.  
Sud, sud, sud.  
Sud, sud, sud.  
The soap on your hands goes sud, sud, sud.  
And the germs go down the drain.

## The Big Achoo!

Tissue, tissue, where are you?  
I can feel a sneeze coming through.  
I'll cover my mouth, and cover my nose.  
Look out everybody! Here it goes!  
Ah... Ah.... Choo!!



## Wash Those Germs Away!

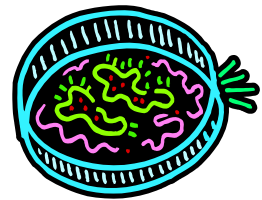
After you use the restroom,  
And after I go outside to play,  
Wash your hands with soap and water,  
And wash those germs away!

# HANDWASHING RAP

You gotta wash your hands, you gotta wash them right  
Don't give in to germs without a fight.

Use water that's warm and lots of soapy bubbles,  
These are your weapons for preventing germ troubles.  
Don't cut short your time, your fingers get between,  
It takes 20 seconds to make sure they're clean.

Gotta wash, gotta wash, gotta wash your hands,  
You gotta wash, gotta wash, gotta wash your hands.



## **Dirt Goes Down The Drain!**

*Tune of "Row, Row Row Your Boat"*

Wash, wash, wash your hands  
Play our hand game.  
Rub and scrub, and scrub and rub.  
Germs go down the drain. HEY!

Wash, wash, wash your hands  
Play our handy game.  
Rub and scrub, and scrub and rub.  
Dirt goes down the drain. HEY!

## **GERMS!**

Wash your face and hands with soap,  
Wash them every day!  
Keeping clean by using soap  
Will help keep germs away!





# Jokes About Germs

Q: What do you call a germ who wants to have a good time?

A: *A fungi!! (fun guy!)*

Q: Why do people keep bandages in the refrigerator?

A: *For cold cuts!*

Q: What did the mold say when he had his picture taken?

A: *“Cheese!”*



**Websites with more information/resources on handwashing:**

[www.germsontherun.com](http://www.germsontherun.com)

[www.henrythehand.com](http://www.henrythehand.com)

[www.glogerm.com](http://www.glogerm.com)

[www.kdhe.state.ks.us.wash-em/education.html](http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us.wash-em/education.html)

[www.kcskinhealth.com](http://www.kcskinhealth.com)

[www.gphealthsmart.com/teaching/lessonplan.asp](http://www.gphealthsmart.com/teaching/lessonplan.asp)

[www.purell.com](http://www.purell.com)

## Books About Germs and Germ Safety:

“Wash Your Hands!” *by Tony Ross*

“Dirt and Grime Like You’ve Never Seen!” *by Vicki Cobb*

“Those Downright Nasty, Disgusting Germs!” *by Judith Rice*

“Why Is Soap So Slippery? And Other Bathtime Questions” *by Catherine Ripley*

“The Magic School Bus - Inside Ralphie: A Book of Germs” *by Joanna Cole*

“Germs! Germs! Germs!” *by Bobbi Katz*

“Germs Make Me Sick!” *by Melvin Berger*

“No Bath Tonight” *by Jane Yolen*

“Meanines” *by Joy Cowley*

## Good Germs?...



Yeast? Yeast is in pretzels and bread! It is what makes bread rise. You can't taste it, but you can smell it when you smell bread baking or pass a bakery!

### Fungi?

Mushrooms are fungi? Yes! One pizza with fungi please!



Yogurt? Yes! Yogurt contains bacteria. Healthy bacteria! I'll have yogurt on my strawberries please!

**Wash your hands**



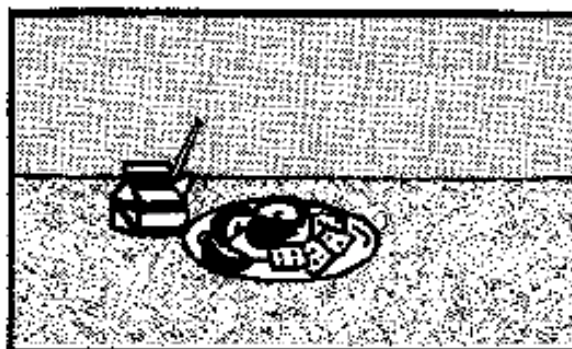
# CHILDREN



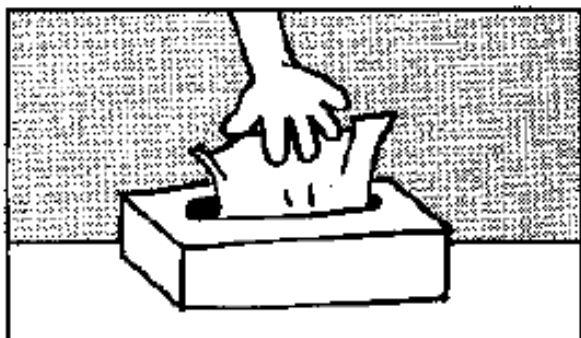
## WHEN TO WASH HANDS



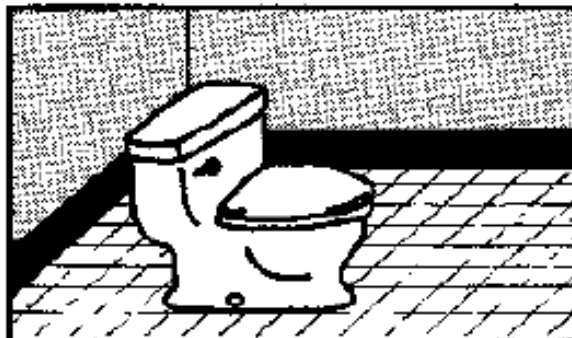
WHEN YOU ARRIVE



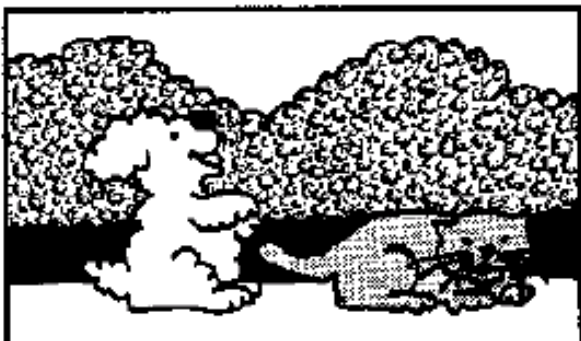
BEFORE & AFTER YOU EAT



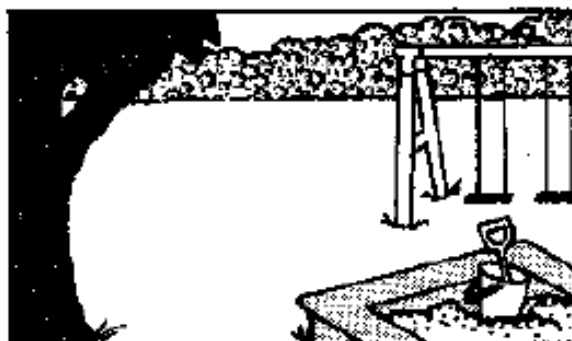
AFTER YOU BLOW YOUR NOSE



AFTER USING THE TOILET



AFTER PLAYING WITH PETS



AFTER PLAYING OUTSIDE

BEFORE & AFTER USING WATER TABLES OR MOIST ITEMS, SUCH AS CLAY.  
WASH WHENEVER HANDS LOOK, FEEL, OR SMELL UNCLEAR.

Dear Parents,

We are learning about handwashing in our class. Please discuss and reinforce these concepts with your child. And remember – your example is your child's best teacher!

### **Why is handwashing so important?**

Washing your hands and your kids' hands is the best thing that you can do to stop the spread of germs. The moment that you finish washing your hands, you start to collect germs again by opening doors, wiping faces, playing with children's toys and changing diapers. You cannot avoid collecting germs, but you can reduce the chance of infecting others by knowing when to wash your hands.

### **When should parents wash their hands?**

Parents should wash their hands before and after activities that have a high risk of spreading germs. **Wash your hands:**

- Before cooking or eating
- Before feeding a baby or child
- Before giving medication to a child.
- After changing a diaper;
- After helping a child to use a toilet;
- After using a toilet yourself;
- After taking care of a sick child;
- After handling pets or animals;
- After cleaning pet cages or litter boxes
- After wiping noses, coughing or sneezing
- Whenever they look or smell dirty



### **When should children wash their hands?**

- Before eating or handling food
- Before playing with a group media (playdough, watertable, etc)
- After having a diaper change;
- After using the toilet;
- After playing outdoors or in sand; and
- After playing with pets or animals.
- Whenever they look or smell dirty

As always – thank you for your support!

**Hey Kids!...** You know the question that comes out of every parent's mouth 1,000 times a day? No, it's not "Why can't you leave your sister (or brother) alone?"; It's not "Did you pick up your toys?" It's: "**Did you wash your hands?**"

Why are grown ups so hung up on hand washing? Why are they so in love with lather?

Washing your hands is the best way to stop germs from spreading. Think about all the things that you touched today - from your telephone to the toilet, your sweaty T-shirt to your slimy tissue, your darling hermit crab to the dirt pile by the playground. Even though you can't see them, many things that you touch every day are covered with germs. When you have germs on your hands, you can pass them to other people without even knowing it and make them sick. Or those same germs can make **you** sick by hitching a ride into your body each time you touch your food or put your hands in your mouth. Think about how many foods you eat with your hands every day.

That's where hand washing comes in! Soaping up makes germs sorry because it rinses them away. When germs go down the drain, they can't make anyone sick!

So when are the best times to wash your hands?

- before eating or touching food in any way (like if you're helping cook or bake)
- after using the bathroom
- after blowing your nose or coughing, or putting your hands in your mouth
- after touching any pets or animals
- after playing outside
- after visiting a sick relative or friend

Now you have the when and the why of hand washing! But did you know that a lot of people don't know **how** to get their paws perfectly clean? The next time you're told to step up to the sink and scrub up, remember these handy hints:

1. Use warm water when you wash your hands. Warm water is better at killing germs. But be careful you don't burn yourself with water that is too hot.
2. Use whatever soap you like. Some soaps come in cool shapes and colors or smell nice, but whatever kind gets you scrubbing is the kind you should use. Antibacterial soaps are OK to use, but they're not necessary for getting rid of germs. Scrubbing does it.
3. Work up some lather on both sides of your hands, your wrists, and between your fingers. Don't forget to wash around your nails - germs' favorite finger hideaway. You should wash for about 10 to 15 seconds. This is about as long as it takes to sing the chorus of a song from start to finish, so sing while you scrub!
4. Rinse and dry well with a clean towel!

*Adapted from: KidsHealth.org*



# Necessities for Proper Handwashing:

- Separate sinks for diapering, food preparation, and handwashing
- Running water (not a filled basin)
- Warm water (for children, temperature not over 120\*)
- Liquid soap
- Disposable paper towels
- Child-height sinks or sturdy, slip resistant step stools to promote independence
- A lined trash can



# Little Dirty Dotty Dunn

Little Dirty Dotty Dunn  
Decided she would have some fun;  
And since it was a sunny day,  
She stepped outside to run and play.  
While walking down a nature trail,  
She saw a rather large brown snail;  
She watched the snail, then picked it up,  
And since she didn't bring a cup,  
She kept the snail right in her hand  
Which now was full of slime and sand.  
“This snail will be an awesome pet,”  
Thought Dotty as she walked, “and yet,  
I think another pet could be  
More than twice the fun for me!”

So Dotty dropped down to the ground,  
And ran her fingers all around.  
She felt a creature soft and wet...  
 (“Now this is *the* most awesome pet!”)  
She tugged and pulled, though it did squirm,  
Until her hand contained a worm!  
“This really *is* my lucky day!  
I'll ask my mom if they can stay!”

So Dotty skipped back to her home;  
Her mom was on the telephone.  
Imagine her surprised reaction,  
As Dotty, full of satisfaction,  
Held out these pets for mom to view,  
“Dotty, Dotty! Look at you!  
Get to the bathroom! Run now, quick!  
Clean those hands; they'll make you sick!  
Get some soap, and then be wiser —  
Use instant hand sanitizer!”

Later Dirty Dotty Dunn  
Heard some rumbling in her tum.  
What she needed was a snack!  
So then she planned out her attack:  
Mounds of whipped cream, marshmallow goo,  
Peanut butter and buttermilk too,  
Canned fuzzy pickles without a label,  
She stacked each on the kitchen table!  
Eat it all? She had her doubts,



So she asked Mom to help her out!  
Imagine now, her shocked reaction  
As Dotty, full of satisfaction,  
Asked her if she'd like some lunch  
Since there's enough for two to munch!

She had a fit, I must confess,  
“Dotty! What an awful *mess*!  
Get to the bathroom! Run now, quick!  
Clean those hands, they'll make you sick!  
Get some soap, and then be wiser —  
Use instant hand sanitizer!”

Dotty learned — getting dirty's okay...  
Because now she knows the proper way  
To finish playing is getting clean  
Through practicing good hand hygiene.



- Author Unknown

# You Better Wash Your Hands

*Tune: "I Want To Hold Your Hand" by the Beatles*

Oh yeah, I'll tell you something  
I think you'll understand  
For the sake of sanitation  
You'd better wash your hands  
You'd better wash your hands  
You'd better wash your hands

Before, and after meals  
And when you use the can  
Soap and water... for twenty seconds  
Should be part of your plan  
That's how you wash your hands  
That's how you wash your hands

And when you're finished  
You'll feel happy inside

Make sure you  
Wash your nails ... And dry with towel or fan  
Prevent those nasty microbes  
From spreadin' cross the land  
You'd better wash your hands  
You'd better wash your hands

And when you're finished you'll feel happy inside  
Washin' so thorough that microbes  
They can't hide, They can't hide, They can't hide

Oh yeah, I'll  
Tell you something  
I think you'll understand  
For the sake of sanitation  
You'd better wash your hands  
You'd better wash your hands

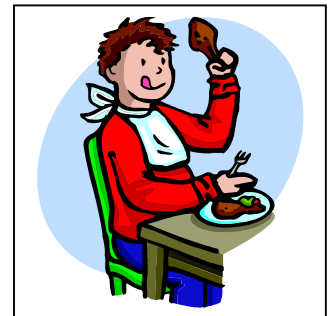
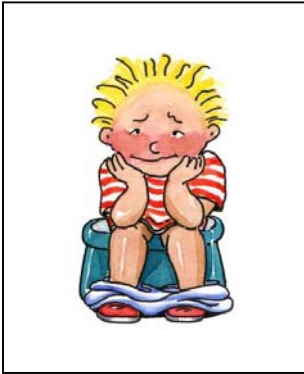
Why don't you wash your hands?



# Wash Your Hands!

Please have your child wash their hands  
upon arrival. Thank you!

# When to Wash Hands...





# HANDWASHING

PLEASE POST

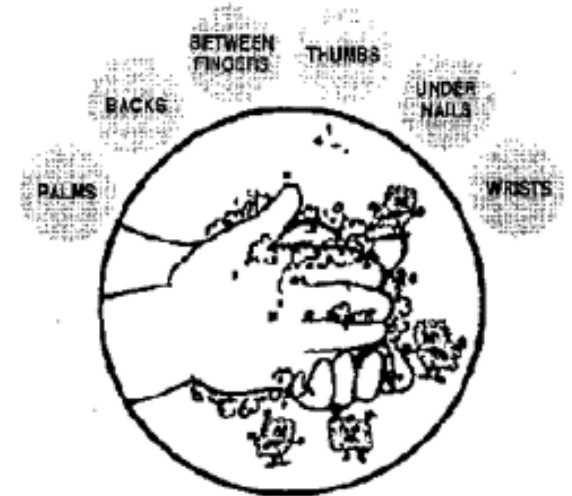
## Steps



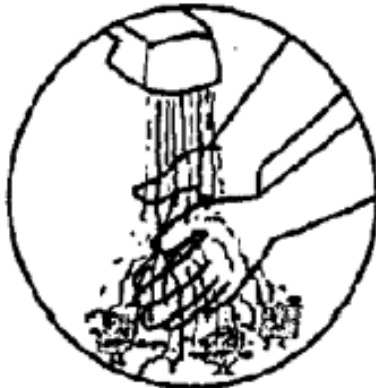
1. WET



2. SOAP



3. WASH



4. RINSE



5. DRY



6. TURN OFF  
WATER WITH  
PAPER TOWEL



# Learning Foundations Curriculum.©



*A creative and comprehensive developmentally appropriate preschool curriculum designed to build skills and facilitate optimum learning experiences, while enhancing self-concept and preparing children for future educational success.*

Written by Cathy Abraham, MEd  
*childcarediva@aol.com*

## So... How do we use this?



The goal of any good curriculum is to be responsive to the needs in the field, and to assist teachers in providing the very best classroom learning experiences for children. Because *you* know what best meets your teaching needs, and the needs of *your* children, feedback and suggestions on this curriculum are encouraged. Quality relies on early childhood teachers participating in the continuing process of improvement – and thoughts and suggestions are welcome and encouraged. These curriculum ideas have been designed as a tool for *you* – as *you* are the critical link to quality!

### ***What we know...***

Our field has some of the very best teachers out there. Based on information and observations of creative, talented classroom teachers, this curriculum has been written based on that fact. This curriculum makes the following assumptions:

### ***Good Teachers...***

- ***Have a personal style that they bring to their classroom.*** Activities can be successfully implemented in a variety of ways, based on what ‘works’ for you.
- ***Know how to adapt activities to their group of children.*** Choose the activities and ideas that you think will work for your class, and adapt or tweak them to meet the needs and interests of your children.
- ***Can often expand upon and enhance the ideas for activities.*** Often teachers can come up with things that we never thought of! Please use this curriculum as a springboard, and incorporate any additional ideas you may have.
- ***Know how to be resourceful and creative, and scrounge around and find materials for their classrooms.*** Some of the best classroom enrichments are not things that can be purchased from educational catalogs. Not everything needs to be handed to experienced teachers, and in fact, most teachers want to be creative pull things together for their classrooms. (And don’t children prefer and appreciate real objects... sometimes just playing with the boxes things come in?)



## *Good Teachers, cont.*

- ***Read the interest cues of the children, and expand upon these areas.*** Materials and activities do not necessarily need to be completely put away and finished at the end of the week if the children are still showing interest in them. Responsive curriculum is all about capitalizing and incorporating the interests and natural curiosity of children.
- ***Know making activities and materials for the children to use is part of teaching.*** A fun part! If possible, rest time is sometimes a good time to work on curriculum materials for the next weeks' theme. Ideas are included for teacher-made materials.
- ***Will ask someone at their center to assist them if something seems unclear.*** If there is something you don't understand, ask someone for clarification or to help you. We are all learners.
- ***Know that offering children choices between a variety of diverse, challenging activities eliminates many classroom behavioral problems.*** Preparation of the classroom environment is one of the best and most effective tools a teacher has for guiding behavior.
- ***Know that children learn through play, and learn best through hands-on activities.*** Continually look at your classroom schedule, environment, and activities, and evaluate if there are enough interactive experiences for your children in which they are active participants.
- ***Children develop skills and self-confidence through doing things for themselves.*** Children should be allowed to do as much by and for themselves as they can. It is the process, not the end product that is important - and where most learning actually occurs.
- ***Some themes lend themselves better than others to activities.*** There are weeks when general ideas and activities will be necessary to round out the curriculum.
- ***Know the benefits of the local library.*** The library is an amazing teaching resource and can transform your classroom! Take advantage of it!
- ***Take responsibility for learning and knowing specifics related to children's allergies, center policies, and state regulations.*** Safety is always first and foremost – as is adhering to applicable rules and regulations governing the center.

The hope is that this curriculum will enable you to continue to provide creative, fun learning activities in your classroom, and will build upon the great things you are already doing!

To all of the wonderful, kind, loving and talented teachers out there - thank you for all of your hard work and dedication... and for everything that you do on behalf of children and families!! I personally consider it a great honor to be a part of your classroom(s)!

Best wishes,

*Cathy Abraham*

Cathy Abraham, MEd  
*childcarediva@aol.com*

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