

## Helping Your Child Develop Skills in Hygiene and Bathing

Your child's safety and health are your priorities. While helping your child develop independent skills in bathing, supervision and monitoring are essential and should be your primary focus during bath time. Developmentally, children do not have motor coordination, reasoning skills, or awareness of danger to a degree that allows them to bathe independently during the preschool/toddler years. However, there are many play and practice activities which can provide practice and awareness of cleanliness and hygiene. Some examples are listed below:

- During play, let your child practice washing dolls and washable toys. Put some soap on the items and let her wash, wipe off soap, and dry.
- Have your child practice with water by filling up small containers and using the water to water a plant.
- Teach your child the importance of brushing teeth and let him practice with actual toothpaste and brushes or by imitating your modeling of the skills in a pretend situation.
- Make hygiene tasks such as clipping nails and cleaning ears a regular part of your weekly schedule.

Emphasize the importance of hand-washing to your child.

Establish a hand-washing routine that includes specific times of the day, such as before snacks and meals, after toileting, after playing outside.

To help your child become more independent with hand-washing skills

- Place soap and drying towel within reach
- Provide a step-stool to help your child reach the sink if appropriate for your child
- Provide a picture step-by-step chart to help your child remember the steps.
- Monitor and supervise your child and provide reminders when needed. Expect some splashing but remember that your child will be learning to be independent and confident in his/her new skills.



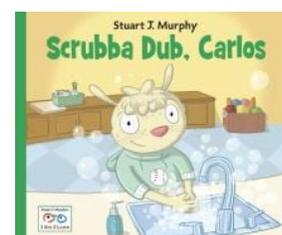
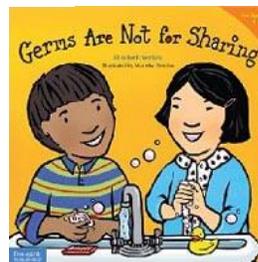
### Books about Hygiene and Health

*Germs are Not for Sharing* – Elizabeth Sertick

*Scrubba Dub, Carlos* – Stuart Murphy

*Wash Your Hands* – Tony Ross

*Super Ben's Dirty Hands* – Shelley Marshall



Most public libraries have collections which include books about dressing; but if your library does not have any, request that they order on loan from another library.

### Key Points – Time – Practice – Encouragement

Encouraging your child to take care of everyday hygiene routines and to use the toilet independently helps him/her learn how to become more independent and self-sufficient.

Although hygiene and bathing skills are skills which usually require adult direction and assistance instruction about the importance of health and hygiene can be emphasized. Many play and learning situations can be developed to reinforce these skills.