HANDWASHING

Handwashing is the single most effective practice that prevents the spread of germs in the child care setting.

When should hands be washed?

**Children:**
- Upon arrival to the center
- Before and after eating
- After using the toilet/diapering
- Before using water tables
- After playing on the playground
- After handling pets
- After coughing or contact with runny noses
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Before going home

**Providers**
- Upon arrival to work
- Before handling food or feeding children
- After using toilet/diaper changing
- After coughing, contact with runny noses, vomit, etc
- After handling pets or pet cages
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Before and after administering first aid
- After cleaning up
- After removing gloves
- Before and after giving medication
- Before going home

**How to wash hands**

- Refer to the Handwashing handout
- Use liquid soap
- Wash well under running water for at least 10-15 seconds.
- Be sure to wash areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails and back of hands
- Use hand lotion

Hand sanitizers may be used for staff and children 3 years of age and older, at times and in areas where handwashing facilities are not available

**Infants and Toddlers**

Use soap and water at a sink if you can. If a baby is too heavy to hold for handwashing at the sink then:
- Wipe the child’s hands with a damp paper towel moistened with a drop of liquid soap.
- Wipe the child’s hands with a paper towel wet with clear water
- Dry the child’s hands with a paper towel
- Do not use hand sanitizers for young children under 3 years of age

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