

Let's Talk about... a NAC Standard... *Good hand washing procedures are practiced by staff and children.* By Lois Gamble

Proper hand washing can greatly reduce the number of children and staff who become ill this cold and flu season. The NAC Standard requires that children and staff:

### **Use liquid soap**

Rationale: Although adequately drained bar soaps do not transmit bacteria, bar soaps sitting in water become heavily contaminated as do bars which have not been rinsed free of the soil applied by dirty hands. In addition, many children do not have the dexterity to handle bar soap. Soap does not need to be anti-bacterial. Of more importance is the procedure of loosening soil by creating lather with water, soap and the friction of rubbing hands together.

### **Use running water**

Rationale:

Rinse lather/soil from hands under running water. Pre-moistened cleansing towelettes do not effectively clean hands and should be used only as a temporary measure until hands can be washed with soap and running water. Do not use liquid hand sanitizers as they are toxic when ingested.

### **Use paper towels to dry hands**

Rationale:

Shared cloth towels can transmit infectious disease. Paper towels, once used, must be discarded.

### **Use paper towels to turn off manual faucets**

Rationale:

By using a paper towel to turn off the water faucet, those who have just completed hand washing prevent recontamination of their hands.

### **Wash hands at appropriate times**

Rationale:

Hand washing should be observed routinely to protect against every potential illness-spreading condition. Times include whenever hands are contaminated with body fluids, before handling and serving food, after toileting or changing diapers, after assisting a child with toilet use, before and after eating meals or snacks, after handling pets or other animals and before and after water play.

Additional information on hand washing can be found in Caring for our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs. Procedures suggested include:

1. Turn on water
2. Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap to hands

3. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 10 seconds. Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry and back of hands.
4. Rinse hands under running water until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave water running while drying hands.
5. Dry hands with clean, disposable, single-use towel.
6. Turn off manual faucet with disposable, single-use towel.
7. Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined trash container.

Attached please find a copy free hand washing guide that you may post in your center.