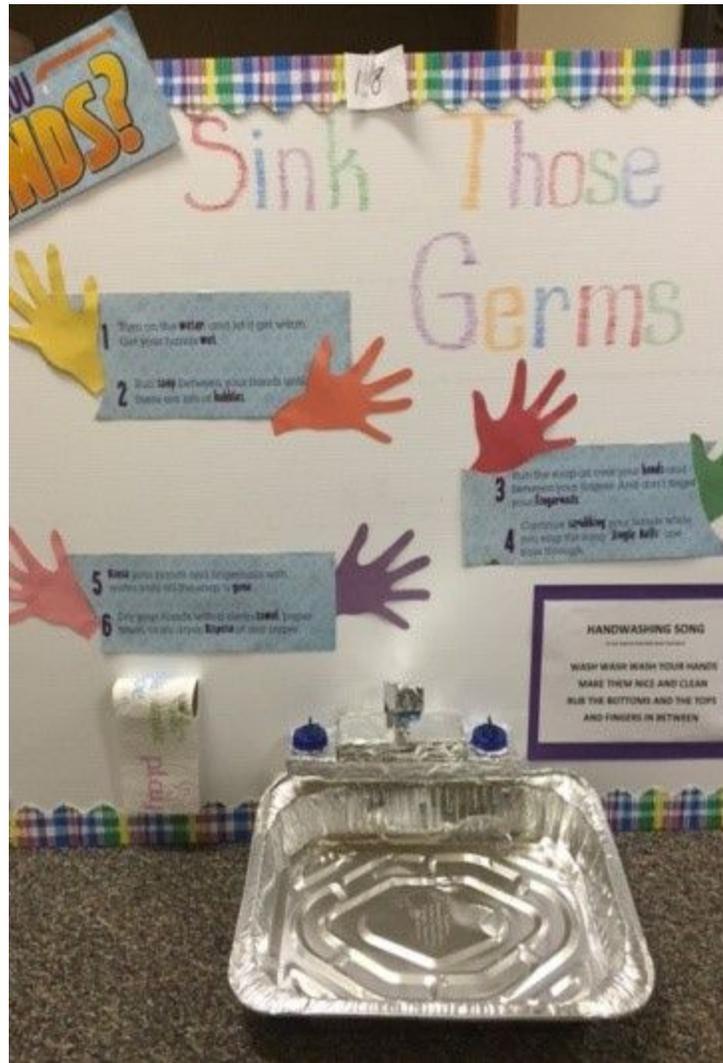


## How to Teach Hand Washing



Riven Oak Head Start Center

### **“Attention all caregivers, and parents”**

Instilling good hygiene at a young age can serve a child throughout a lifetime. Because hand washing is instrumental for removing harmful germs and bacteria, learning to wash hands properly will teach children some basics of personal hygiene. Teach hand washing to preschoolers to ensure they wash thoroughly and wash for long enough. Make the lesson enjoyable so they will carry out proper hand washing techniques every time and reduce the incidence of illness.

**Things You'll Need:**

- Soap
- Towel

**Instructions:**

1. Select a song that appeals to preschool children. If they have just learned a new song or if they have a favorite song, use it. Find a song that the child can sing in approximately 20 seconds.
2. Talk briefly about germs and how germs can make people sick if they get inside the body. Tell the child that we cannot see germs, but they are everywhere, including our hands. Talk about how washing hands is a way to remove germs from hands and keep them from getting inside the body. Mention the important times to wash hands, including before eating, after using the bathroom and after playing outside.
3. Show the child/ children how to use warm water and enough soap to create a thick lather all over their hands. Instruct the children to sing the song you selected while they scrub their hands. They must scrub their hands for the entire time they sing the song (at least 20 seconds). Mention scrubbing between fingers and under fingernails also. Smile and laugh, indicating that hand washing is fun and enjoyable.
4. Demonstrate rinsing the soap from your hands and drying them with a towel.
5. Invite the child / children to pretend washing their hands if you have a large group. If you have a smaller group and time permits, invite the child/ children to actually wash their hands using these new techniques. While the child / children either pretends to wash their hands or wash their hands with water, have everyone sing the song to ensure they connect singing the song with the time spent scrubbing.
6. Encourage the child / children to show their new hand washing technique to others and to sing the song each time they wash their hands. This will ensure that the child / children lather their hands for at least 20 seconds, and kill the majority of the germs on their hands.