

# Fight Germs! Wash Your Hands!<sup>1</sup>



Washing your hands often and well is an easy way to help prevent the spread of many infections. Here are some recommendations.

## What are the best times to wash hands?

### Children should wash their hands:

- Upon arrival at the child care setting
- **Immediately before** eating
- **Before** going home.
- **After** eating; using the toilet; having their diaper changed; contact with bodily fluids; playing on the playground; handling pets, pet cages, or other pet objects
- **Before and After** using water tables
- Anytime hands look, feel or smell dirty

### Parents and staff should wash their hands:

- Upon arrival at the child care setting
- **Immediately before** handling food, preparing bottles, or feeding children
- **After** using the toilet, assisting a child in using the toilet or changing diaper; contact with a child's body fluids, including wet, soiled diapers, runny noses, spit or vomit; handling pets, pet cages, or other pet objects; cleaning a child, the room, bathroom items, or toys; removing gloves used for any purpose
- **Before and after** giving or applying medication or ointment to a child or self
- **Before** going home
- Anytime hands look, feel or smell dirty

## What is the best way to wash hands?

- **Use warm, but not hot, running water and soap.** Run the cold water first. Then, gradually increase the amount of warm water; testing the temperature yourself before the child puts her hands under the tap.
- **Scrub hands** with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds (long enough for children to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice). Include between fingers, under and around nail beds, and backs of hands.
- **Rinse well** under running water with fingers down so water flows from wrist to fingertips. Leave the water running.
- **Dry your hands** with a fresh paper towel
- **Turn off faucet** with the paper towel, instead of bare hands.
- **Help young children wash their hands** using the above method. As they become experienced, you can teach them how to wash their hands while you supervise.



<sup>1</sup>Adapted from the Illinois Early Learning Project and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.