

SpeakEasy Sandbox #37: Squeaky Clean

Pre-verbal

Activity: Use the sign for "wash hands" to signal to your child what's coming next. Check out the sign at the top of the page. When it's time to wash your child's hands, such as before or after a meal, use the words and the sign at the same time.

"Time to wash your hands. Wash, wash wash." Using the sign and the words together will help your child to understand the phrase "wash hands."

Vocalizer

Activity: When it's time to wash your child's hands, use the words and the sign at the same time. **"Time to wash your hands. Wash, wash wash."** After using the sign several times, check in to see if your child will imitate it. Announce, "Time to wash your hands. Ready to...w- (start the word and the sign, then freeze, giving them a chance to try)...ash!" If they are not quite ready yet, that's ok! Just keep modeling the sign and the word together.

First words

Activity: Sing a handwashing song with your child each time you wash. (To the tune of "Frere Jacques") **"Tops and bottoms, tops and bottoms** [rub the top of your hand, then the "bottom"/palm]/ **In between, in between** [lace your fingers together and rub in between]/ **Scrub my hands together, scrub my hands together** [rub hands all around] / **Now I'm clean, now I'm clean** [rinse, then hold your hands up and shake them]."

Word combiner

Activity: Teach the steps of handwashing with pictures or drawing of each step. Put your pictures up near a place you regularly wash your hands, like the bathroom mirror. Before you wash, show AND tell your child each step using sequencing words like first, next, then, last. Go through it again, and see if your child can help fill in some of the words as you point to each picture (**"First we turn on the water, next we get...the soap!"**). For more on visual schedules, check out *Learning Time* in our newsletter this Saturday.

Full sentences

Activity: Teach your child about good cleaning practices by having a car wash for their toys. Wash your hands before this activity (we think the song listed under *First Words* would be a great addition). Then add a bit of soapy water and some clean scrub brushes or sponges to a bin. Let your child dunk their cars in, and scrub each part. Can they scrub the wheels? The doors? How about the windshield? Feel free to add in other toys, and scrub all of their PARTS, too.

👉 Ask the OT

Help your child move toward being more independent with their handwashing routine. In addition to teaching the steps of the routine, keep a step stool available, practice pumping the soap dispenser together, and place a hand towel down low at a reachable height.

The SpeakEasy Sandbox is a newsletter that provides the necessary tools to boost your child's language and feeding development through play. Sign up at www.speakeasycommunity.com.