

Weaning



ARTICLE

## Child's Hygiene

**Learning through water play . Playing with water is not only fun, it's a great way to teach your child about hygiene.**

**5 mins  
to read**

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## Learning through water play

Playing with water is not only fun, it's a great way to teach your child about hygiene. By associating water with fun, you're getting him used to the idea of bathing or showering with water.

But it's not an activity that your child should be doing by himself. Always make sure that you are by his side, joining in the educational fun and watching out to keep him safe. There are several **games or activities** you can try with water.

### Filling Containers

- Let your child fill up all kinds of colourful containers to learn about math concepts like full/empty, light/heavy, more/less and shallow/deep. Get your child to count how many cups it takes to fill a larger container.
- Filling containers encourage eye and hand coordination for better motor skills.

### Playing in water

- Fill up a paddle pool and let your child just splash around to get used to and not be afraid of being in water.
- Drop little toys into a bathtub or paddle pool for your child to “fish-out” with a net or scoop so they can enhance their motor skills.
- Make little boats from paper or foil to sail around the tub or let your child drop toys, coins or objects of different weights into the tub to guess which will float or sink.
- Fill up squeeze bottles and help your child discover how to squirt long or short distances. Punch holes in plastic bottles for that fun effect!

### Water Painting

- Children love to pretend, so give your child a paintbrush and a pail of water and let him pretend to “paint” the garden chair, fence, slide and other outdoor things. This works out his little muscles while encouraging his creative expression.

### Play “Grown-up”

- Have an area where your child can let water spill-over freely, so that he or she can wash doll clothes, tubs, gardening tools and other things in water and hang them to dry.
- Let your child clean-up after water play using rags or short-handled mops as a learning experience.

More importantly, the more your little one plays in water, the more confident he will feel in water and this is helpful when the time come to teach him how to swim! Also, you can encourage your child's hygiene by showing him how to wash his hands.

### Washing your child

A daily ritual, bathtime is the perfect opportunity for you to spend one-on-one time with your child and shower him with hugs and affection. Plus, you get to teach him about the importance of hygiene and cleanliness. To make this a pleasurable experience and **avoid any tantrums**

, follow these few tips:

- Prepare everything you need to wash your child beforehand – a clean terry towel, soap, nappies, plus the clothes to dress your child in after his bath
- As soon as you have heated the bath water to 37°C, turn off the telephone.
- Soap your child from the head to toe – from the cleanest to the dirtiest part. Washing your child with your bare hands is a chance to caress and massage him and help him relax and experience skin-to-skin contact.
- When your child is in the bath, sing a nursery rhyme or tell a story.
- When you remove him from the bath, dry your child without rubbing his skin and don't forget the tiny folds around his neck and in between his toes.
- As your child begins to relax, cut his toenails (use small scissors with rounded tips) and clean his ears (never in the ear canal) and nose if runny.
- Once dressed, your child is ready for a day of excitement or a wonderful night's sleep!

## **Toilet-training**

**Toilet-training** is not easy for a child. However, your child's hygiene also depends on you ensuring he knows how to use the toilet. Just like walking or sleeping, going to the toilet is not just a matter of training but also a physiological reflex, as he needs to learn how to control his sphincter muscles.

Doctors pinpoint this ability at around 18 months. If your child is potty-trained earlier, it's simply a matter of chance. Don't force your child. Just help him through this stage and try a few pearls of wisdom from experienced mums:

- Explain to your child that keeping clean is part of becoming a big boy or girl. Swapping his nappy for a lovely pair of pants might help convince him.
- Just because your little one is looking slightly tense, there is no need to rush him straight onto the potty. He may wee in fear before getting there.
- Choose a simple potty that won't be confused with a toy. Your child needs reassurance and encouragement, and shouldn't feel any pressure if he cannot go. Never leave your child on the potty for more than 10 minutes as this will seem like a punishment.
- To help your child know what's expected of him, avoid alternating between nappy-on and nappy-off days. Every once in awhile, let your child roam around with a bare bum to help him differentiate between feeling dry and wet.
- Avoid comparing your child with others as each develops at his own pace.

There are lots of advice on how to toilet-train your child, but it is only with your patience, understanding and encouragement that your child will pass through this stage successfully.