



OT Time!



February 2019 – Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene is a very important self-care skill that most of us take for granted. It can affect health, socialization, and eventually, employment. Learning these skills and becoming independent may take longer for some children than others. Whether it be a sensory issue, anxiety, or just needing a little extra push and practice, these tips can help ease the struggle of creating independence in these self-care tasks.

General Strategies for Personal Hygiene

- Break down the process into smaller steps.
- Provide visuals when possible to pair with verbal cues.
- Explain why each task is important.
- Allow your child to choose items needed for hygiene tasks (i.e., toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner).
- Take advantage of YouTube. There are several videos with different characters who help teach important self-care skills.
- Create songs to sing for different steps.
- Use a timer for each task.

Handwashing

- Talk about *when* to wash hands (i.e., after bathroom, before eating).
- Model handwashing.
- Sing a song that lasts about 20 seconds (i.e., ABCs, Happy Birthday).
- Provide adaptations, such as a step stool, long handle, and soap within reachable distance.

Teeth Brushing

- Experiment with different brush sizes, bristle firmness, and handle thickness for a best fit.
- Trial electric toothbrush instead of a manual toothbrush.
- Try different flavored toothpastes (i.e., mint, bubblegum).
- Determine if there is a preference between using warm or cold water.
- Use a mirror.

Bathing/Showering

- Use a showerhead that adjusts pressure and sound to decrease the amount of sensory input.
- Use a handheld nozzle so your child can control when/where the water hits.
- Warm the temperature in the bathroom before bath or shower.
- Dim the lights.
- Trial different times of the day. When you find one that works best, *set a schedule*.
- Be aware of the scent of soaps and shampoos.
- Use soft washcloths/loofas.
- Have your child practice washing body parts on a plastic doll.
- Encourage child to say body parts when cleaning each one.
- Keep several different toy options available to play with in the tub.
- Use baby wipes to clean if shower/bath is unavailable.

NEVER LEAVE A CHILD UNATTENDED IN THE SHOWER OR BATHTUB.

Items to Keep on Hand

- Portable hand sanitizer
 - Mini packs of tissues
 - Baby wipes
 - Breath mints/gum
- *Look for colors/designs that appeal to your child in order to make using these items more fun!*



For more tips and resources, visit:
www.acesets.org/services/occupational-therapy/parent-resources/
www.pinterest.com/acesets

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