

Self-Care activities

Practical ideas and activities to help
promote independence with self care



Contents

Page

Hand washing	4
Tooth brushing	6
Washing/showering	8
Hair washing	9
Hair brushing	10
Toileting/ Bottom wiping	11



All our publications are available in other formats

Introduction

This booklet has been designed to provide practical ideas/activities to help promote independence with self care activities. All references to child / children mean either a child or young person.

Self care activities are tasks which are completed on a daily basis to look after yourself and your body. They include activities such as hand-washing, tooth-brushing, washing/showering, hair care and toileting/bottom wiping. Encouraging the development of self care tasks within a fun, unpressurised environment will be beneficial for your child's learning/skills. Allow your child plenty of time to practice the skills by themselves on a daily basis is key to mastering any skill.

Each page provides:

- Things to consider before each task.
- Things to try to make the task easier for your child.

The booklet contains examples of hand-washing, tooth-brushing, washing/showering, hair care and toileting/bottom wiping and self care checklists to help young people complete tasks in the correct order.

Hand washing:

Things to consider:

- Consider whether your child can reach the wash hand basin, can they reach the taps – if not please consider a suitable bathroom step.

Things to try:

- Encourage your child to complete all aspects of the hand washing routine independently for example using soap, turning taps on and off, plus drying hands.
- Talk your child through the routine, to help them learn the sequence. Pictures/photos can also support this, see page five for example.
- Aim to complete the entire routine without prompts.
- Consider if your child can reach the soap or soap dispenser? Do they have the strength and manual dexterity to pump the liquid soap? If not consider alternatives e.g. bar of soap.
- You may want to consider if they have a preference to liquid or a bar of soap?
- Hand drying – do they have easy access to a hand towel to dry their hands on?

Things to be aware of:

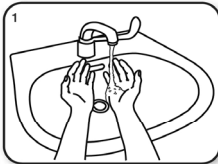
- Using public toilets –
Be aware that children up to age 5 are generally upset by the noise of the hand dryers; this is not exclusive to those with sensory differences.

Hand washing technique:

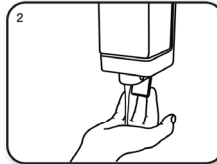
How to wash your hands



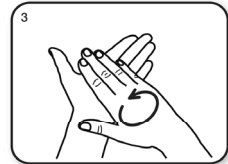
Source: World Health Organisation



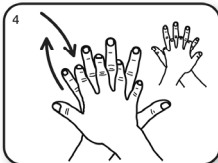
Wet hands with water



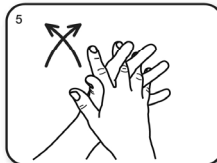
Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces



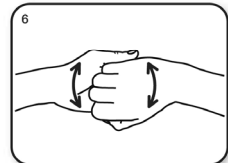
Rub hands palm to palm



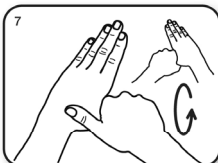
Right palm over the back of the other hand with interlaced fingers and vice versa



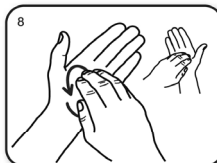
Palm to palm with fingers interlaced



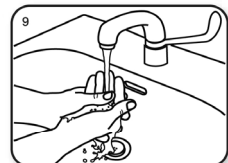
Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



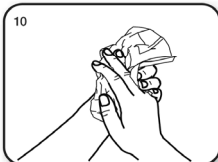
Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa



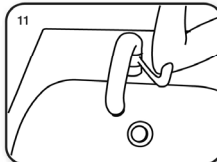
Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa



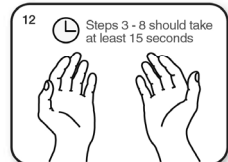
Rinse hands with water



Dry thoroughly with towel



Use elbow to turn off tap



Steps 3 - 8 should take at least 15 seconds

...and your hands are safe

Remember your wrists

NHS staff with any skin problem should contact the Occupational Health Department

Adapted from the World Health Organisation

Last reviewed: March 2016

Tooth brushing:

Things to consider:

- Before starting tooth brushing, please consider whether your child can reach/access the wash hand basin and see self in mirror. You may wish to consider a bathroom step.
- If your child is unsteady, consider completing in a seated position.
- Allow your child to choose their own toothbrush to encourage participation.



Things to try:

- Encourage your child to complete all aspects of the tooth brushing routine including squeezing toothpaste on to brush and replace the toothpaste cap. If this is challenging could you consider buying pump action toothpaste dispenser to help finger isolation.
- Brush teeth using technique highlighted below, then rinse brush under tap.
- Looking in a mirror should help your child understand and see where the brush is positioned in their mouth.
- Use battery powered or electric toothbrush to compensate for poor brushing technique.

- Encourage 2 minutes brushing for thorough cleaning, this can be done whilst listening to a full song on radio/music player or kitchen timer. There are a variety of apps available for tablets and Smartphones including “AquaFresh Brushtime” app, “Toothbrush timer”, and “Brusheez” – the little monsters toothbrush timer.
- If your child continues to have difficulty using the toothbrush, then try using their fingertip with toothpaste on it to feel their teeth and mouth to help get used to moving their hands in different directions to reach all parts of the mouth.
- There are a variety of products that slip over fingertips to support teeth brushing. These are available from a number of online suppliers such as Amazon, e-bay and infant product stockists such as chemists and Mothercare.
- If your child does not like mint toothpaste there are other flavours available to try, for example; fruit flavour or flavourless toothpaste, available from a variety of online suppliers.



Washing/showering



Things to consider:

- Can your child reach taps/shower controls independently?
- Can your child turn on shower/ run their own bath with supervision with regards to temperature control. Temperature gauges for baths are available from a variety of sources.
- Can your child reach all areas of their body to wash all body parts with soap/shower gel?
- Can your child open/close shower gel/shampoo/ bubble bath bottles?

Things to try:

- Encourage your child try all aspects of washing and drying independently.
- Encourage drying self with towel. If they find it difficult using a large bath towel, try a smaller hand towel size or wrapping themselves in a towelling robe.
- If the child is unstable, consider encouraging a seated position.
- Encourage use of deodorant/body spray, at an appropriate age. Using a roll-on deodorant or solid stick, may be helpful to try if they have difficulty holding and spraying a deodorant can with one hand.

Hair washing:

Things to consider:

- Can your child raise both hands to their head?
- Can they tolerate water on their face?
- Can they tolerate using shampoo?
- Do they need any physical support to stand or sit safely in the shower or bath – a grab rail, a seat? (Speak to an Occupational Therapist for advice.)

Things to try:

- Practice washing dolls/toys hair to look at technique.
- Soapless shampoo caps/dry shampoo are available.
- No tears formula shampoos to avoid sore eyes.
- Allow your child to hold the shower hose to control the direction of the water from the shower head.
- Shampoo shields are widely available, and would allow the young person to wash their hair without the risk of soap/water in their eyes or on their face.



- Encourage the young person to dry their hair afterwards with a towel. Towelling turbans are also available, which may be easier to manage.

Motivation to practice and build up new skills can be exceptionally difficult, due to low confidence and self-esteem when they know the difficulties they have to learn and master something independently.

It may be helpful to break activities into smaller parts, encourage independence in each component before moving on. Young people learn new skills easier by copying others (modelling). Give praise at every effort to build confidence. Have fun while you are mastering new skills.

Hair brushing

Things to consider:

- Can your child raise their hand(s) above their head?
- Can they reach behind their head to the back of their neck?
- Can they hold a brush/comb – do you need to consider alternatives which may be easier to grip?



Things to try:

- Practice brushing dolls hair or another person's hair.

- Using a mirror to see all areas of hair.
- De-tangling spray, Tangle Teezer style brush to make the job easier for those with long/thick hair.
- Long handled combs/brushes are available online.



Toileting/Bottom wiping:

Things to consider:

- Bottom wiping can take many months of practice for your child to achieve. It may be helpful to practice in advance of starting nursery or school, if possible.
- Be patient with your child and encourage them to participate with as much of the task as possible.
- Your child may find bottom wiping difficult as they have to reach and find their bottom without being able to see what they are doing. They may also have difficulties with using enough force when wiping, getting toilet paper and repeating the wiping action. Always make sure your child knows how to wash their hands well after wiping their bottom.



- Ensure that your child is seated on the potty/toilet with their feet supported either on the floor or on a step.

Things to try:

- Talk through the steps involved with going to the toilet to help your child to understand. A sequencing chart may be helpful to consider.
- Show your child what it is they need to do. This can be when they need to use the toilet or through pretend play, for example modelling on a doll/toy.
- Start by using toilet wipes until your child is able to use toilet paper alone.
- Reinforce wiping from front to back, especially with girls to avoid infection.
- Advise your child to “wipe until there’s no stripe”, and encourage them to visually check that the paper/wipe is clean.
- Some children find it easier to get off the toilet to squat for wiping.



- Other games to play could be; place pegs on clothes at the child's bottom, and ask them to twist round to remove them. Practice passing a bean bag/small soft toy between legs from front to back to encourage correct movement/stretching/reaching.
- Use reward charts/stickers each time the child successfully wipes. Praise all attempts.



Contact Information

Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy Services (North)

Rainbow House,
Ayrshire Central Hospital
Kilwinning Road
Irvine KA12 8SS
01294 323070

Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy Services (East)

Level 2 The Johnnie Walker Bond Building
15 Strand Street
Kilmarnock
KA1 1HU
01563 553611

Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy Services (South)

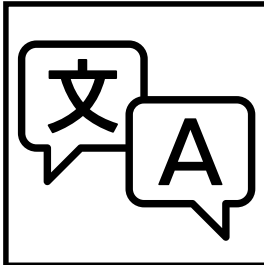
Arrol Park Resource Centre
Doonfoot Road
Ayr KA7 4DW
01292 614988

All new requests for assistance for Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy services should be forwarded to:

The Rainbow House Mailbox:
aa-uhb.clinical-rainbowhouse@aapct.scot.nhs.uk

Notes

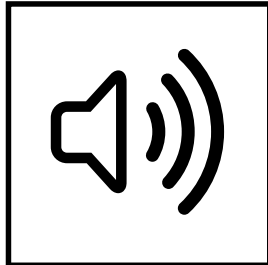
We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print.



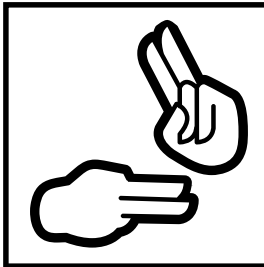
Translations



Easy to read



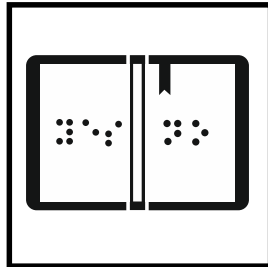
Audio



BSL



Large print



Braille

 **Call: 01563 825856**

 **Email: pil@aapct.scot.nhs.uk**



Tell us what you think...

If you would like to comment on any issues raised by this document, please complete this form and return it to our Feedback and Complaints team: PO Box 13, Eglinton House, Ailsa Hospital, Dalmellington Road, Ayr KA6 6AB.

Alternatively, you can call free on **0800 169 1441** or email **complaintsteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk**

Name

Address

Comment