



# Family Well-Being: Hygiene Tip Sheet

For Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS); Refugee Resettlement; Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS); Early Care and Education Providers

All providers can support families by encouraging them to teach their children hygiene habits that they will use throughout their lives. Good hygiene minimizes the spread of germs and also contributes to positive social interactions. This Hygiene Tip Sheet corresponds to page 3 of the [Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development Handbook](#).

## Conversation Starters: (or staff, families, and partners can design program-specific questions)

- How are hygiene practices in the U.S. similar to and different from those in your home country?
- How might hygiene affect a family's well-being and health?
- What are some ways you teach your children to have good hygiene habits?

## Cultural Considerations:

- Refugees, especially those who lived in refugee camps, may not have had plentiful or easily accessible running water prior to arrival, thus regular hand washing may not be a habit.
- Refugee parents may be unaware of U.S. practices regarding keeping children home from child care or school when sick—they may keep them home longer or shorter than other parents.
- For some refugees from camps or villages in warm climates, children may have run around outside without a diaper, with freedom to eliminate at will. Diapering may be new for some refugee parents, and it may seem too expensive in comparison with other family needs.
- Bathing habits vary by culture, climate, and country. Americans are sensitive to the smell of body odors, while other cultures may view such smells as normal and natural.
- People from all cultures may use perfumes, spices, and cooking ingredients, which can present new aromas to others.
- Refugees who had to carry water by hand prior to living in the U.S., or those who lacked plentiful running water, may not be in the habit of bathing as frequently as many Americans do. They also may not be accustomed to hot running water, which can increase their risk of water burns.
- Use of sunscreen may be new, and it may be too expensive to prioritize. Parents may not be aware of the need to wash it off a child's skin.



## Remember to Mention:

- Schools and childcare centers have policies for when sick children must be kept at home. This will help control the spread of illness.
- Good diaper care can prevent rashes and discomfort for babies. It is important for the area to be sanitized and for adults and children to wash their hands before and after diapering and toileting.
- Parents are responsible for monitoring children closely while they are in the bath and should be aware of potential dangers of leaving children unattended.
- Parents should ensure that their children wear clean clothes daily (including socks and underwear).

# Family Well-Being: Hygiene Tip Sheet (cont'd)

---

## Applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/Head%20Start%20Requirements/1304>

45 CFR 1304.40 Family partnerships (f)(1) and (2)

45 CFR 1304.22 Child health and safety (e)(1) and (2)

## Resources on ECKLC:

### National Center of Health

- **Healthy Active Living (I Am Moving, I Am Learning & Let's Move! Child Care)**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/healthy-active-living/healthy-active-living.html>
- **Health Literacy: Tips for Health Managers from the Head Start National Center on Health**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/health-services-management/program-planning/health-literacy-staff-tips.pdf>
- **The Head Start Orientation Guide for Health Coordinators**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/health-services-management/program-planning/TheHeadStartOr.htm>

## References:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention—Improving Child Development:  
A New CDC Handwashing Study Shows Promising Results

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/programs/child-development.html>

Kids Website.

<http://www.kidsskinhealth.org/kids/#/SkinHairNails/HairHealth/>

Healthy Children—Nutrition, Health, Hygiene, Disease Prevention and More:

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/growing-healthy/Pages/default.aspx>

Germ Prevention Strategies

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Germ-Prevention-Strategies.aspx>

A Healthy Antidote to Illness

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Hand-Washing-A-Powerful-Antidote-to-Illness.aspx>

