

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- Respond in a timely and consistent manner when children need something. Learn to read their cues, cries, and *gestures*. Ask family members how and when children may communicate certain needs.
- Establish regular *routines* for diapering, toileting, hand washing, eating, sleeping, and dressing children. Do things the same way every time as much as possible.
- Use routine care as opportunities for one-on-one interactions; talk about the routine and feelings, sing a song, move legs and arms of young infants.
- Provide children many opportunities to use the bathroom when they show they are ready. Support all attempts to use the toilet. Coordinate the timing and process of toilet learning with the family.
- Establish routines of hand-washing at appropriate times (before and after meals, after outdoor play, etc.) and provide guidance for children to learn how to wash their hands appropriately. Provide hand-washing stations that children can reach safely on their own.
- Encourage children to practice cleansing their mouths and brushing their teeth. Model tooth brushing for older toddlers and preschoolers. Provide stations for tooth brushing that children can reach safely on their own.
- Encourage children to take an active part in dressing themselves. Suggest a step the child can complete (“Put your foot in your pant leg.” “Pull up your pants.” “Pull your arm out of your sleeve.”).
- Give children plenty of time and space to complete routine *self-care* tasks, such as hand washing, brushing teeth, toileting, dressing to go outside, and eating.
- Encourage children to show independence in self-care practices. Provide time, support, and equipment as needed.
- Ask families and healthcare professionals if a child has special self-care needs. Help children understand and participate in these special self-care tasks. Use picture cards to guide them through the steps of self-care routines like hand washing.
- Learn about the abilities and customs of children and their families. Set up routines so children can do them successfully. Make routines as similar to home as possible.
- Teach and *model* hygienic practices (sneezing or coughing into your elbow or sleeve).
- Teach children about the benefits of good personal health practices. Make sure to consider individual family beliefs and customs.
- Hold, cuddle, make eye contact, and talk with young children to build trust.
- Maintain First Aid and CPR certification.
- Understand and respond appropriately to signs of child abuse and neglect.
- Do not make children do things they are afraid to do. Help them learn to trust their feelings about what is safe and what is not safe.