

Domain: Sanitation and hygiene

Age group: 8-11 years

Subjects: Diarrhoeal diseases, handwashing, latrine use and hygiene, economic water use

2.5 Racing to the loo

Learning goals:

Knowledge:

- Children know the critical times, proper ways and reasons for washing hands.
- They know which diseases are transmitted by not washing hands.
- They become aware of the implications of wasting water.

Attitude:

- They see washing hands as important for their own health and for that of others.

Practical skills:

- They wash hands after toilet use and before eating in school. They do not waste water.

Psychosocial life skills:

- They analyse behaviour, think critically and creatively, practise free speech, come up with alternatives, are aware of gender and social equity issues, and do not discriminate against others.

Participatory methods:

Physical competition

Materials:

Two buckets with water, two scoops, soap or substitute, e.g. ash or clean sand

Activities:

Part of this activity takes place outside. Note that the children will get wet so it has to be a warm and sunny day.

- Invite the children to talk about a situation when they or others had diarrhoea and had to race to the loo, but ran into a problem. Alternatively, they can draw the situation and explain or look at the drawings and guess what the drawings are about.
- Divide the class into two equally sized groups, for example, by asking the children to count aloud if they are number one or two, or an elephant or a lion, or any other two names that are locally appropriate.
- Take the two groups outside.
- Place two buckets with an equal amount of water and two cakes of soap, on a leaf or a plate or something similar, at one end of a long stretch of open space and at some distance from each other.
- Ask the children to choose one child in each group who will be the water dispenser, or choose two children yourself, (making sure not to always choose the same children or to exclude children from disadvantaged groups).
- Explain to the dispensers that they will pour some water over the children's hands and after they have washed with the soap, pour some water again.
- Position yourself between the two buckets as the referee.
- Explain that the two groups will race each other to the buckets and wash their hands. The next child can start when the first one has come back.

- When the buckets are empty, explain that the group has won that had the largest number of children who had washed their hands when the bucket was empty.
- Back in class, facilitate a discussion asking, for example:
 - Why is washing hands important?
 - What may happen if you do not wash your hands?
 - When should you wash your hands? (including baby care)
 - What are good ways to wash hands?
 - Can anyone wash hands? If not, why not? What can be done?
 - Who does sometimes not wash hands? Why? What can be done?
 - Why do we want to save water? How can we do this?
 - Do we waste water in our school/home/community? What can we do about it?
 - For older children: Which diseases are spread through lack of handwashing?

Variation

Eye infections are common in dry and dusty climates. They can be prevented by more frequent face washing. Unfortunately, there are often strict norms in such areas to restrict water use, even for personal hygiene. Older women and men in the family may criticise children and young mothers who wash their faces regularly. The amount of water needed is, however, often less than thought. Face washing competitions in class and at a parents' day can help counter this belief.

Application:

- Visit and observe the handwashing facilities with the children to check that there is proper drainage, presence of soap and no leaky faucets. If there is no soap, discuss alternatives: Can the children bring left-over soap to school, e.g. the pieces left over from clothes washing? In some schools children keep a piece of soap in their pencil box. The school may also organise ashes or clean sand for handwashing.
- Asks the children to observe if a friend is washing hands after using the toilet and talk to them if s/he does not do so. Some schools place handwashing basins on wash stands on the school veranda. The teacher and fellow students check if children wash their hands when returning from the toilet.
- Older children accompany younger ones to teach them good latrine use and about handwashing.

Learning indicators:

- The children can correctly give/write down 2-4 critical times for handwashing. They can demonstrate (with explanation) how to wash hands correctly. They can give two consequences of not washing hands and of wasting water.
- They can explain how socio-economic situations affect hygiene. They do not tease other children about the quality of their clothes or their home conditions.
- They regularly clean the water storage reservoir without discrimination or regularly clean their water bottles. They share drinking water hygienically with children who do not have bottles of their own.

Competence:

Hygienic and non-wasteful use of water