

# TEACHING HYGIENE SKILLS



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) impacts everyone differently. It is common for children to struggle to independently complete hygiene tasks or tolerate those tasks at all. The good news? There are ways to help!

Teaching hygiene is about fostering a sense of dignity and self-worth while empowering children to care for themselves. Effective teaching should respect the child's sensory needs and developmental level. This can be achieved by using evidence-based approaches paired with reinforcement to foster a positive learning environment.

## Why is Teaching Hygiene Important?

- ✖ Hygiene is critical to health and safety
- ✖ Good hygiene is important for building social relationships
- ✖ Learning to complete hygiene tasks leads to independence

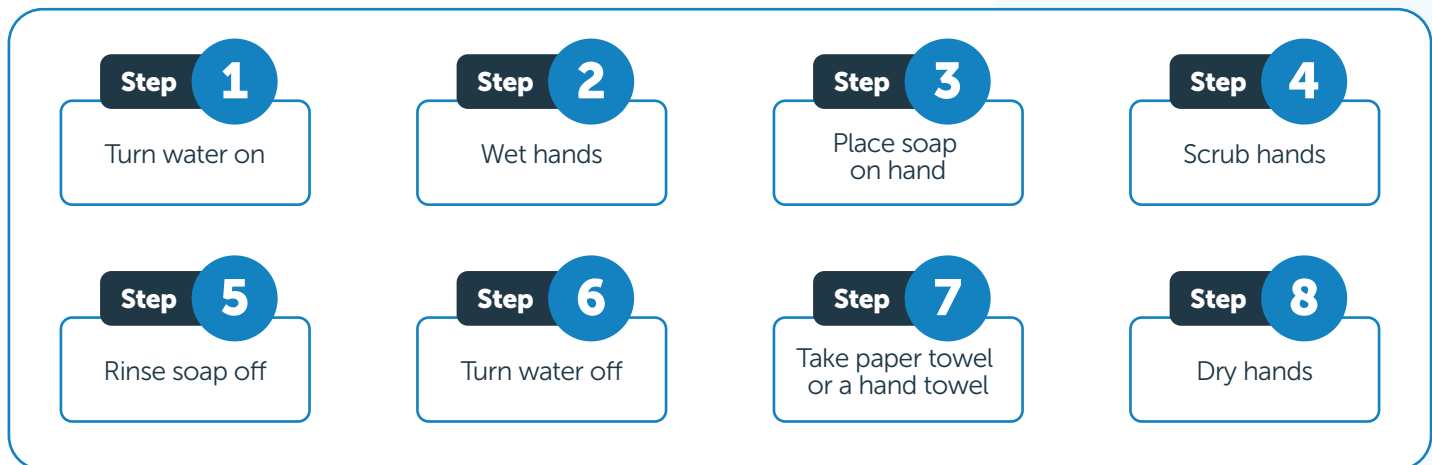
## Why are Hygiene Tasks Difficult?

- ✖ The tasks come with many different, nonpreferred sensations, including unique textures and smells
- ✖ Some tasks interrupt routines
- ✖ Often, the tasks are long and can be hard to do quickly independently



## How Can You Help?

- ✦ Reinforcement is key! Reinforcement motivates children to complete challenging tasks, such as hygiene routines, by associating the task with a positive outcome.
  - Pick an item or activity your child loves. Consider saving this for when they successfully complete their hygiene task!
- ✦ Make a Task Analysis. This is a way to break down tasks into small, manageable steps. These small parts help the task be a little less overwhelming for the learner and you!
  - Let's say you want to make a task analysis for washing hands. Let's break it into steps! Here is an example:



- ✦ Start small, especially if your child does not like to do the task.
  - After you've made the task analysis, only have your child complete one step at a time. After they are successful with the step, immediately give them the reinforcing item or activity! Slow and consistent practice will help your child learn and tolerate the hygiene task.

## What if hygiene tasks are still difficult?

Collaborate with your child's team (doctor, teacher, psychologist, BCBA, SLP, OT, and other professionals) for help!

