

Domain: Hygiene

Age group: 2-14 years

Subjects: Personal hygiene, parts of human body, personal hygiene-related ailments

1.1 Clean is beautiful

Learning goals:

Knowledge:

- Children can define good grooming.
- They are able to identify different parts of the body.
- They can tell how common diseases spread through poor personal hygiene practices (e.g. through learning about eye and skin diseases in lower primary school to learning the correct names, transmission and prevention processes and treatments in upper primary schools).

Attitude:

- Children appreciate good personal hygiene practices in self and others.
- They show willingness to keep their bodies clean.

Practical skills:

- Children can demonstrate how to wash/clean different part of their bodies.
- Upper primary girls and boys know how to keep their private parts clean.

Psychosocial life skills:

- Children understand links between poverty and hardship in hygiene.
- They can discuss risky practices without discrimination.
- They can seek help when experiencing problems with personal hygiene.

Participatory methods:

- Singing and miming
- Pair work
- Game (Train Game)
- Pick a question from the basket

Materials:

Water, soap, ashes, commercial toothbrush, stick toothbrush, nail cutter, comb, toothpaste, salt foam from plants (if available), flash cards, slips of paper/cards/slates, (felt-tipped) pens or chalk, beans or seeds.

Activities:

Singing and miming

- Prepare a song for young children that allows them to mime specific habits of personal hygiene. For example:
"This is the way we wash our face....we wash our face....we wash our face. This is the way we wash our face...early in the morning. This is the way we comb our hair, etc. Brush our teeth ...Cut our nails," etc. until all personal hygiene activities have been covered.
- Encourage children, in open discussion, to describe their personal hygiene habits.
- Teach the children to sing the first couplet of the song.
- Encourage the children to come up with their own examples of hygiene.

- Invite children one by one to sing and mime what they have done before coming to school.
- Sing about and mime one practice with them and then ask them to suggest the next practice.
- After singing, stimulate a group discussion on, for example,
 - a) why each practice is important;
 - b) what you need for it;
 - c) what else you can use, e.g. certain twigs for a toothbrush, ashes for soap;
 - d) for older children: what ages their brothers and sisters start the different habits, if they can help them, and how.

Pair work

- Ask children to draw on paper or slates, implements used for personal hygiene, or (for younger children) prepare them yourself. Alternatively, bring some real implements, using local materials, such as a brush made from a dried plant, a twig for a toothbrush, ashes instead of soap, etc.
- Ask the children to form pairs and match the pictures or the implement with the parts of their body on which they will use them.
- Ask them to explain to each other how they are used and why.
- Ask older children to write and read out cards or slates with the names of the implements, the parts of the body and the verbs for the hygiene practices: to comb, to cut, etc. This also helps them to develop their language skills.
- Ask older children to discuss which diseases are prevented by using the implements and why.

To vary the activity, and as a refresher exercise, ask the children to put the cards/slates showing the implements in a pile or mix them up. Now ask the children to match them with the right parts of the body.

For another variation, misspell the words and ask the children to spot the errors.

When working with children from different ethnic groups, ask the children to write the names in their own language and do the word and spelling exercises in their own language as well as in the national language. This activity gives recognition to indigenous languages and at the same time helps stimulate the learning of the national language.

Help children in early puberty to discuss body hygiene by working in small groups of their own sex. Ask them to make drawings, write a story or develop a role-play about an imaginary friend or friends to make the subject less personal and help to open discussion.

Live demonstration

- Ask children to prepare a real live demonstration of good and bad personal hygiene habits. They can use actual materials or act the habits, using mime.
- Ask them to give an explanation of what they show and the reasons why this is good or bad practice, or to use mime to demonstrate in silence.
- Ask the other children to explain what they have seen and why the practice was good or bad.
- Ask older children about specific diseases that may be passed or blocked by these practices, the reasons why such diseases may be passed on and to whom they might be passed.
- Discuss whether good practices are always possible, and why some bad practices persist.
- Ask the children what they will do to adopt good practices themselves and to stimulate them in others.

Train game

- This game combines movement with hygiene learning and habit formation.
- To start off, choose some children to staff a number of train stations: the 'hair station', 'teeth station', 'face station', 'nails station', etc.
- Make sure that choices are fair so that station staff include girls and boys from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.
- Line the other children up as train passengers. Tell them that their destination is 'Our Healthy Home'.
- Ask the children to pass each station and station staff to check each passenger.
- Give each station supervisor a number of beans and ask them to award one or two beans to every child according to their knowledge on questions about hygiene for various parts of the body. Older children can give awards on a scale of 1-5, using slips or beans, depending on whether the children are learning to count or add.
- When all children have reached their destination, ask them to count or add up their marks.

The higher the score the more questions they answered correctly. The activity also helps children develop their skills in numeracy.

Explain that the children who obtained lower scores can now improve their scores because they are better aware of the importance of good habits of personal hygiene.

A note of caution

In the train game, and all other activities on hygiene, there is a risk of discriminating against children who are less hygienic for reasons of poverty and/or other problems at home. Quality teachers are aware of such problems and encourage and praise them for practising good personal hygiene with simple means. They also stimulate understanding and social consciousness among the other children. The teacher discreetly helps children with specific problems such as perspiration.

Application

- Have some equipment for personal hygiene in school, such as a pair of nail clippers. Encourage children to ask to use the equipment. Supervise the children in using the equipment and clean it after use.
- Put questions about personal hygiene into a box or basket. Ask some children to pick a question from the basket, read the question to the other children and give the answer.
- Put drawings of equipment or real equipment into a box or basket for younger children. Ask them to pick one in turn and explain their use and benefits.
- As a home assignment, ask older children to list which simple items of personal hygiene are present in their homes, such as a comb, soap, a nailbrush, a nail cutter, etc.
- In class, ask the children to give the name of the first item, write it on the board (or let the children do this) and then tally, or let them tally how many children have the item at home.
- Do the same with the next item, until all items have been listed.
- Use this information to let the children do some numerical exercises, such as counting the tallies and writing the totals in figures behind them, ordering the items from most to least present, and (older children) asking them to calculate the average numbers of each item for the class as a whole.
- Finally, help them analyse what the findings tell them about strengths and weaknesses of personal hygiene.
- Discuss where and how improvements can be made.

Learning indicators

- Children can name the parts of the human body and link them to hygiene habits.
- They can mention risk factors of poor personal hygiene practices and benefits of good personal hygiene practices.
- They can demonstrate and explain how to properly wash hands, brush teeth, wash face, etc.
- They can list daily and weekly good personal hygiene habits.
- Children aged 12-14 feel safe to discuss personal body hygiene and can do so respectfully.
- Teachers observe and counsel children on personal hygiene practices with understanding and without discriminating against children in difficult circumstances or causing them embarrassment.

Competence:

Positive personal hygiene practices



School children in the class room (Photo: Mariëlle Snel)