

Caring and handling

Embryology skill:

Handling chicks safely

Life skill:

Relating to others

Science skill:

Observing and communicating

School subjects supported:

Health and safety

Preparation time:

One hour

Activity time:

One class period

What you need:

- ☐ Ultraviolet light
- ☐ Antibacterial hand soap
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Water



Introduction

Did you know you could be dangerous even though you don't want to be? When you handle something as small and delicate as a chick, you should be extra careful not to hurt it. Give it lots of time to rest after you pick it up. Here's an even bigger surprise. That cute, warm and fuzzy ball of fur could be dangerous to you. No, it won't bite or punch you, but it might carry **germs** that could make you sick. That's why it is important to wash your hands after you have picked up a chick. Then both you and the chick will be healthy and strong.



Get ready

Once the chicks have hatched, students naturally want to hold them. But newly hatched chicks should not be handled much, if at all. Some children may not have the coordination needed to handle chicks appropriately. Proper handling is important to keep an animal as fragile as a baby chick from being stressed or harmed.

Most students understand the importance of washing their hands after they go to the bathroom. It is also important to wash after handling a chick. This exercise was designed to ensure proper handling of the chick, proper hand washing for the safety of the child and the prevention of disease in the child or the chick.

Your students should work in pairs or groups of three or four, with one chick per group. Students will have to sit on the floor, so have a blanket or sheet available for them to sit on. Also, set up a hand-washing station in the classroom. This station could be a sink or just a bowl of warm soapy water. Include some paper towels.



Do it

The students should sit down on their sheet with their feet touching each other. Pass around a wind-up chick, Beanie Baby or stuffed animal the size of a chick until each child has held it. An adult should supervise this activity, so the students learn to handle the object correctly.

After this initial activity, place a real chick in the center of the circle and allow the chick to run around. When the chick goes to someone in the group, he or she may pick it up (under adult supervision) for one minute. Then the student should put the chick down in the circle and let it go to someone else, who may hold it for a minute. This continues until each child has held the chick for a minute. After all the students have held the chick, put it back into the brooder.

After holding the chick, rub "Glitter Bug Potion" on the hands of each student.

Ask them to hold their hands under a black light and look for signs of germs. Ask them to describe what the germs look like.

Then ask your students to wash their hands with antibacterial soap and dry them thoroughly. They should again hold them under the black light to see whether the germs are gone.



Share

- How did it feel to hold a baby chick?

Process

- Why did you handle the Beanie Baby chicken before you handled the real chicken?
- How could improper handling of a chick hurt it?
- Why is it important to wash your hands after handling a chick?

Generalize

- When you were holding the chick, how did the chick tell you that it was comfortable or uncomfortable?
- How do other baby animals let you know when they are comfortable or uncomfortable?

Apply

- What do you do when you are uncomfortable? Too hot? Too cold?
- Why is washing your hands important?
- What will you do differently the next time you handle chicks?

For
2nd and
3rd Grade

Kids only

Trace your hands and color in the spots where you found the most germs.

Ticklers

How many of your students know how to play "Ring around the Rosie?" Ask the students in their groups to join hands, circle around their blanket or sheet and then sit down on the sheet.

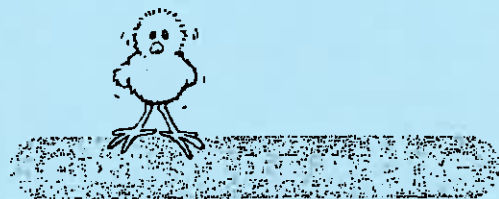


Take it home

List all the different activities after which you wash your hands.

Share it

Teach a younger brother, sister or friend to wash their hands properly.



How would you make a germ-free environment?



After the chicks hatch out of their shell, they must stay in the incubator until their down is completely dry. Birds should be moved to an environment (such as a brooder) that provides the following: supplemental heat, food (such as a chick starter diet), and good clean water. Students should not handle chicks a lot because too much handling can stress them and allow them to get sick.

To pick up a chick, always move slowly and gently. Cup your left hand with the fingers pointing upward. Place your right hand around the chick (fingers pointing downward) until you can pick it up. Place the chick in your left hand. Hold your right hand cupped around the top of the chick (fingers still pointing downward) so the chick will not escape.

Some of your students' motor skills may not be fully developed, depending on their ages. For example, a child might hold the chick too tightly, suffocating it. Or a child might hold the chick loosely, allowing it to fall.

Children and adults who handle chicks also need to know the importance of hand washing. All warm-blooded animals, (like dogs, humans and birds) carry salmonella, a bacterium that can cause severe diarrhea and dehydration. You and your students should thoroughly wash with antibacterial soap to prevent contamination. To ensure that students wash properly, place a harmless dye on the students' hands and look at them with a black light.