



Living is Learning – Washing the Dishes

Whether you go for using water and a washing up bowl, or loading the dishwasher, there's lots of learning in washing the dishes.: filling and pouring, sorting and stacking, wiping and scrubbing, pressing buttons (*Maths: Shape, Space and Measure, Physical Development: Moving and Handling*).

You will need: some dirty dishes, a washing up bowl, water, washing up liquid, sponge/brush OR a dishwasher

Remember to think about being safe – e.g. check for sharp knives.

1. Begin by doing some sorting. You can stack the plates together. Put the cups in one place. All the cutlery can wait in a pile. Do some counting as you go - how many cups have we got?
2. If you're using a washing up bowl, show your child how to fill it with warm water. Let them squirt the washing up liquid in and watch it make bubbles – lots of talking opportunities here (*Communication and Language: Speaking, and Understanding*).
3. Show them how to wash one thing at a time and stack them on the wrack for drying (*Physical Development: moving and handling*). You can use some Maths talk here: How many plates have you washed now? One more cup... (*Maths: Number*).
4. Give them time to explore the water: filling and pouring from the cups (*Maths: Shape, Space and Measure*), letting the water run through their fingers, watching the bubbles (*Understanding the world: The World*).
5. Talk to them about why we need to clean the dishes, why the water needs to be just right – not too cold, not too hot (*Physical Development: Health and Self Care*).
6. If you're using a dishwasher, once you've sorted the dirty dishes on the worktop, help your child decide how to fit them into the machine. Model talking about what you're doing: That's too big to go there, this will fit here, we can put a small cup here (*Maths: Shape Space and Measure*).
7. When it's loaded, let your child press the button to switch it on! (*Understanding the World: Tech*)

Extension Ideas:

As they wash up, talk about the shapes of things – the plate is round like a circle. Ask how many cups they think it will take to fill the jug? Then have a go – were they right? How many things are left to wash up (or load if you are using a dishwasher)? Are there more dirty dishes on the worktop now or less? (*Maths: Number and Shape, Space and Measure*). What do they notice about the water as time goes on - it cools down (*Understanding the World: The World*). When everything is dry, they can help you put it all away!