



**FIG 12-6** Thorough hand washing is the single most effective method of preventing infection.

Children need preparation for the preschool or kindergarten experience. For young children, it represents a change from their usual home environment and prolonged separation from their parents. Before children begin school, parents should present the idea as exciting and pleasurable. Talking to children about activities (such as painting, building with blocks, or enjoying swings and other outdoor equipment) allows children to fantasize about the forthcoming event in a positive manner. When the first day of school arrives, parents should behave confidently. Such behavior requires parents to have resolved their own feelings regarding the experience.

Parents should introduce their child to the teacher and the facility. In some instances, it is helpful for parents to remain with the child for at least part of the first day until the child is comfortable and at ease. Other specific actions that can help reduce separation anxiety include providing the school with detailed information about the child's home environment, such as familiar routines, favorite activities, food preferences, names of siblings or pets, and personal habits. Such information helps the child feel familiar in the strange surroundings. When schools automatically request this information, the parent has a valuable clue to evaluating the quality of the program because the request represents the staff's awareness of each child's needs. Transitional