

PRESS RELEASE

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Save the Children Fiji

Clean hands saves lives.

Save the Children Fiji are using glitter to teach the benefits of washing your hands with soap to children across the country in their kindergarten classrooms, today.

As part of their annual Race for Survival to be held this week, Save the Children are this year focusing on preventing water borne diseases which are likely to increase with the dry weather predictions across the country.

Diarrhea and skin infections are likely to increase in dry weather conditions where access to safe drinking water is reduced which many communities are already experiencing across the country.

Hand washing with soap for 20 seconds is proven to be the most cost-effective way to reduce the risk of sickness and Save the Children is encouraging this more than ever in these dry and dusty conditions.

SC Fiji's Education Manager Ruth Kuilamu said using a fun and interactive way to help children understand the benefits of hand washing is the focus of this event which is giving simple tools on how children can keep themselves safe in dry conditions.

"Research shows that washing your hands with soap reduces your chance of getting sick by more than 50% so at this time of dry weather where people are conserving water we are asking everyone to ensure they are washing their hands well with soap to prevent sickness."

"To ensure children interact with this message we are using glitter. Children will put glitter on their hands before they wash their hands with soap to remove the glitter. After which they will re-apply glitter and then wash their hands without soap," she said.

The glitter represents the germs that are on our hands and if you use soap most of the glitter comes away but without it the germs or glitter stay glued to your hand.

Globally, estimates by UNICEF show 1 child dies every 30 seconds from diarrhea but washing hands with soap is thought of as a "do-it-yourself" vaccine to this common illness.

The messages being spread across the country will be part of the big message presented to decision makers from children this Friday at Save the Children's Race for Survival event in Labasa. The event will show communities how to create cost-effective ways to save water and protect your health and is on from 9am-12noon at Guru Nanak Primary School Oval.

Contact

Lisa Kingsberry

Media and Communications

+679 9252849

lisa@savethechildren.org.fj

Mere Krishna – Education District Officer

+679 8689323