

Sanitary Practices

Regulations in the Child Care and Early Years Act require that all Caregivers of home child care practice good health and sanitary practices. The following section is taken from the Region of Waterloo's Public Health Department Resource Manual for Child Care Providers, "Safe Healthy Children".

This section contains sanitary practices that must be followed for the following activities:

- Hand Washing for Caregivers and Children
- Use of Disposable Gloves
- Household Cleaning
- Toy Cleaning
- Sensory Bins
- Water Play
- Outdoor Play
- Care of Pets
- Diaper Changing and Use of Potty Chairs

Caregivers must review this section and implement routines in their households that follow these guidelines

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the best way to prevent transmission of most types of infections. Hands, more than any other part of the body, are in constant contact with the environment and are prone to picking up many types of organisms. Microorganisms can be carried on hands to spread infections from person to person.

- Normal skin flora is composed of resident and transient organisms.
- Resident organisms are those that can survive and multiply on skin and are not easily removed by scrubbing
- Transient organisms survive on the skin less than 24 hours and are easily removed by hand washing. It is these organisms that are most likely to cause infections.

You should wash your hands:

- at the beginning of the day
- before changing a diaper
- after changing a diaper
- after using the toilet
- before handing food
- after contact with body fluids (blood, mucous, vomit, etc)
- after removing gloves
- after contact with any nasal or oral secretions
- after caring for an ill child
- after sneezing or coughing

- after handling and caring for animals to protect yourself and the children you care for.

If hand washing is impossible, for example, on field trips, an alcohol based wet-wipe may be used

Children should wash their hands:

- when they arrive at the child care setting
- after diapering and toileting
- before eating or drinking
- after contact with any nasal or oral secretions
- on return from outdoor play
- before communal play
- after handling animals

to protect themselves and other children.

Hand Washing for Infants

If children are too young to wash their hands for themselves you must do it for them.

- Wash their hands with soap and a warm, wet disposable towel.
- Rinse with a separate wet towel.
- Dry hands on dry paper towel.

Hand Wash Basins

Hand basins must be readily accessible in diapering areas, food handling areas and washrooms. They must be equipped with hot and cold running water, liquid soap in a dispenser and paper towels. If sinks and soap dispensers are inaccessible for children, a stable, solid and secure step must be provided.

Shared basins full of water and soap are not an acceptable means of hand washing as more bacteria may be transmitted to the hands than is removed. If basins are used after painting or other messy activities to remove visible material, proper hand washing must still be done at the hand wash basin.

Hot water temperature at the children's hand basin must not exceed 43°C (110°F) in order to avoid scalding.

A supply of liquid soap in a dispenser is required at all hand wash basins. Liquid soap in a pump or mounted dispenser is best because children can dispense the soap easily and the liquid soap is less likely to be contaminated. Germicidal soap is not necessary. To prevent soap on the bottom of the dispenser from providing a medium for bacterial growth the dispenser must be cleaned before refilling.

Hand Lotion (For caregivers only)

Hand lotion should be used to prevent dermatitis, as cracked dry hands can harbour large number of microorganisms that are difficult to remove. Studies have shown that even antiseptics cannot reduce bacteria on cracked and dry skin. Hand lotion should be in a dispenser instead of a communal dip-in jar. Containers that are re-used must be washed before refilling.

Hand lotion should not be used on children unless the medication sheet is signed by a parent.

Glove Use

Disposable gloves are not a substitute for hand washing, but they do provide some protection for the Caregiver.

Gloves are not recommended for every diaper change.

Gloves can be useful:

- if a caregiver has dermatitis, cuts or open sores on the hands
- if there is a risk of exposure to blood and/or body fluids
- during outbreaks of an enteric/diarrhea disease
- if dealing with diarrhoeal stool, to prevent faecal material from gathering under fingernails

Disposable latex gloves must never be washed or reused.

Hands must be washed prior to gloving and after removing gloves as bacteria can multiply on the hands in the warm, moist environment of the glove.

Care must be taken when removing soiled gloves. The outside of the glove may contain microorganisms. Avoid touching the outside of the glove with your bare hand. Extensive glove use is suspected of causing an increased incidence of contact allergy to latex. There has been concern about the relative efficiencies of vinyl versus latex glove. Either should suffice if gloves are of good quality.

Adequate cleaning and sanitizing in child care settings will aid in the prevention of transmission of infections. Cleaning is as important as sanitizing in the treatment of walls, floors, etc. These surfaces are not generally implicated in the transmission of infection. Physical removal of the microorganisms by scrubbing is as important as the sanitizer used.

Cleaning is the removal of dirt and germs from a surface by friction caused by a rubbing action.

Sanitizing will kill germs by applying a chemical sanitizing solution (i.e. chlorine bleach and water).

Methods of Sanitizing

The "spray-wipe-spray" technique is a good method of sanitizing surfaces. The first spray and wipe is to clean, and the second spray is to sanitize. If the sanitizer is also a good cleaner, then one product can be used for both steps, otherwise separate products must be used.

- Spray surfaces from bottles filled with appropriate sanitizing solutions, using the spray-wipe-spray technique. This method can be used for diaper change areas and potty chair cleaning.
- Immerse the object into a container of sanitizing solution and allow to air dry
- Wash and sanitize durable objects in the dishwasher.
- Wipe the surface of large toys, or objects that may be harmed by saturation (book covers, puzzles, etc.). Use a cloth moistened with appropriate sanitizing solution.

Remember to:

- Clean the surface prior to sanitizing.
- Mix the chlorine sanitizers daily and in the proper concentration, place the solution in a opaque bottle clearly labelled with the contents.
- Store cleaning products out of the reach of children.
- Use approved sanitizers according to manufacturing instructions.

Cleaning and Sanitizing the Toileting Area

- Hand Washing Sinks - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled
- Faucets and Handles - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled with approved solution
- Surrounding Counters - Clean daily or when soiled
- Toilet Bowls - Clean Weekly using a toilet bowl cleaner
- Toilet Seats and Rims - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled with approved solution
- Flushing Handle - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled with approved solution
- Door Knobs - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled with approved solution
- Floors - Clean daily or when soiled with approved solution
- Change Table - Clean and Sanitize after each diaper change with approved solution

Bleach Solutions

Normal Strength - 1/4 cup (4 tablespoons) household bleach to 1 gallon water or 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 litre of water: toys, diapering areas, tables etc.

Extra Strength (1:1) - 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water: blood spills, heavy contamination with feces or vomit, regular cleaning during an outbreak.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Practices

- Food Preparation Areas - Clean and Sanitize before and after food preparation with normal strength bleach
- Tabletops - Clean and Sanitize before and after food is served with normal strength bleach solution
- Countertops (Non-food areas) - Clean daily or when soiled
- Floors - Clean when soiled - wash
- Carpet - Clean - twice per week or when soiled - vacuum, wipe up spills and then clean with appropriate cleaner and twice per year - steam/deep clean
- Small Rugs - Clean twice per week - vacuum or launder

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In order to help prevent the spread of infections (bacteria, viruses, parasites) in the child care setting it is important to clean and sanitize toys on a regular basis.

Infants/Toddler Toys

- Clean and sanitize toys that have had contact with a child's mouth on a daily basis using an appropriate sanitizing solution by using the spray-wipe-spray or immersion technique. If possible, these toys can be placed in the dishwasher.
- Sanitize all frequently handled toys such as books and puzzles twice a week or as required. Since immersion or spray bottle technique may damage some items, a clean cloth moistened in an appropriate sanitizing solution may be used. If the toys are visibly soiled, clean the item prior to sanitizing
- Machine wash soft, cuddly (plush) toys weekly or more if required.
- Clean all larger toys, activity centres and toy storage shelves on a weekly basis.

Toys for Preschool and School-Aged Children

- Clean toys on a weekly basis if older, non-diapered children are using them.
- Avoid having "mouth" toys (musical instruments, whistles, blow-pipes etc.). If you choose to use this type of equipment, it must be cleaned and sanitized between each child's use, or encourage the parents to supply their child with their own equipment.

Dress-Up Clothes

- Dress-up clothing is to be laundered weekly.
- Sharing of hats is not recommended. If headgear is an integral part of play, wash or clean after every play session.

Toy Cleaning

Remember toys should not be shared between age groups. In an outbreak situation toys should be cleaned and sanitized between uses to stop the spread of the outbreak pathogen (i.e. Hepatitis, Conjunctivitis).

- Small Toys that go into mouth - Clean and Sanitize daily with appropriate sanitizing solution and air dry
- Larger Toys - Clean and Sanitize weekly or if soiled with appropriate sanitizing solution and air dry
- Dress-Up Clothes - weekly - launder and dry in dryer
- Hats/Headwear - Clean after every play session - wipe rigid objects, launder, do not use wigs
- Water Play - Clean and Sanitize after each session - air dry

Water Play

Studies involving water play in child care centres have shown that bacteria can survive and be a potential source of infection. Regular cleaning and sanitizing is necessary to reduce the risk of infection. Problems can be avoided by following a few guidelines.

- Wash hands of children prior to water play activity.
- Fill the container with water from an approved source.
- All toys and articles used in water play must be cleaned and sanitized prior to use.
- Empty water from the receptacle after each play session.
- Clean and sanitize after use, allow to air dry.

Water play at communal table is not appropriate:

- during outbreaks
- for children with cough and colds
- children with skin rashes or sores
- children who are prone to drinking the water

Sensory Bins

- Wash hands before and after play periods.
- Food material used in play must be used with discretion. Dry products such as macaroni, rice and cornmeal are very popular and are relatively problem free. Cooked food must not be used for sensory play.
- Do not use any product that emits dusts or powders.
- Do not use agricultural grade material (corn, hay, bird seed etc.) due to possible contamination by pesticides or insects.
- Discard all food products at the end of activity sessions (maximum one week). Do not repackage and store.
- Non-food items in the sensory bins must be carefully considered. Avoid any size of item that may be accidentally swallowed.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play areas are attractive to unwanted visitors, human and animal. Hazards may be reduced by taking the following steps.

- Do not assume that a fence will keep out unwanted visitors. Check the perimeter for gaps.
- Check the area including the sand box for animal feces, broken glass or cans, condoms, needles and syringes.
- Do not pick up sharp objects with your hands. Gloves will not provide protection from punctures. Provide a rigid barrier between the object and your hands, such as tongs, scoop or shovel.
- Scoop animal faeces and surrounding soil or sand with a small shovel or scoop, and discard.
- Rake sand on a regular basis. Sunlight provides an effective protection against some microscopic contaminants. Treating sand with chlorine bleach solutions and/or boiling water has very little effect on microorganisms

Pets In The House

Interaction with animals can be a positive experience for many young children. The following risks and responsibilities should be considered before making a decision to have a pet in a home child care setting:

- safety and health issues
- transmission of infections
- cleanliness
- allergies
- additional workload
- accidental abuse by young children

Recommendations for caring for animals:

- ensure children handle pets under adult supervision
- ensure adults maintain and clean the animal's living quarters
- cat litter must be changed regularly and kept away from children's play area
- ensure all pets are healthy and have current vaccinations
- maintain the animal's living quarters away from food areas
- keep animal food, litter and feeding dishes out of children's reach
- wash hands after feeding and handling of animals
- wild animals are not appropriate pets in home child care

Requirements For The Care of Animals in Home Child Care

- All dogs and cats must have a current rabies vaccination as verified by a licensed veterinarian.
- Any bite or attack by an animal must be reported immediately to the Home Child Care program.