

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
- Outbreak/Illness
- Sensory Bins
- Water Play
- Outdoor Play
- Care of Pets

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

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread 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.

Caregivers should wash your hands:

- at the beginning of the day
- before and after changing a diaper
- after using the toilet
- before handing food
- after contact with body fluids (blood, mucous, vomit etc.)
- after removing gloves
- after caring for an ill child
- after handling and caring for pets/animals
- after handling any oral or mucus secretions (runny noses)

- after sneezing or coughing

If hand washing is impossible, for example, on field trips, hand sanitizer 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 playing with other children
- after handling animals

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.

Hot water temperature must not exceed 43°C (110°F) in order to avoid burns.

Soap must be in a pump as it is less likely to be contaminated by multiple users. Antibacterial soap is not necessary. Hand lotion should not be used on children unless the medication sheet is signed by a parent.



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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 diarrhea to prevent faecal material from gathering under fingernails
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- Disposable latex or vinyl gloves must never be washed or reused – they must be disposed after use.
 - 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.



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Household Cleaning

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 Vs Sanitizing

- 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 bleach solution/sanitizing solution daily and in the proper concentration as per manufactures instructions, and place the solution in a clear bottle clearly labelled with the contents.
- Store cleaning products out of the reach of children.



Cleaning and Sanitizing the Toileting Area

- Hand Washing Sink - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled
- Faucet and Handle - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled
- Surrounding Counters - Clean daily or when soiled
- Toilet Bowl- Clean Weekly using a toilet bowl cleaner
- Toilet Seat and Rim - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled
- Flushing Handle - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled
- Door Knobs - Clean and Sanitize daily or when soiled
- Floors - Clean daily or when soiled
- Change Table - Clean and Sanitize after each diaper change



Bleach Solutions for Sanitizing

Normal Strength - 1/4 cup (4 tablespoons) household bleach to 1 gallon water or 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 litre of water

Use on: toys, diapering areas, tables etc.

Extra Strength (1:9) - 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water

Use on: 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 daily
- Carpet – vacuum daily, wipe up spills and then clean with appropriate cleaner and twice a year- steam/deep clean
- Small Rugs - vacuum daily

Document Number: 3725006

Version: 1

Cleaning Toys

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.



Preschool and School-Aged Toys

- 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.



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.



Outbreak/Illness

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. Covid, Conjunctivitis).

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Version: 1

- 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

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.



Shared Water Play

- during outbreaks
- for children with cough and colds
- children with skin rashes or sores
- children who will likely drink 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 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).
- Non-food items in the sensory bins must be carefully considered according to the children's age. Avoid any size of item that may be accidentally swallowed or cause choking.



Summary of Cleaning and Disinfecting Schedule

The charts below are minimum recommendations that apply to normal operating conditions. During an outbreak of a communicable disease, extra cleaning and disinfecting will be necessary. Not all toys can be immersed or sprayed with a disinfectant. A clean cloth moistened with a disinfecting agent may be used to wipe surfaces, where appropriate. For more details, see [Safe and Health Children: Preventing Illness](#).

Toys	When	How
Small toys that go into mouth	After being mouthed	Clean, sanitize and air dry. Hard plastic toys can go into the dishwasher.
Large toys	Weekly	Clean, disinfect and air dry.
Frequently handled toys, such as cleanable books and puzzles	Twice weekly or as required	Clean, disinfect and air dry.
Dress up clothes	Weekly	Clean (launder) and dry on the hottest setting.
Hats and headwear	After each play session	Clean (wipe or launder).

Sleep Areas	When	How
Crib rails	Daily, if crib is used or shared by other children.	Clean, disinfect and air dry
Bedding and linens	Weekly for toilet-trained children. Change daily if crib and bed is used by other children.	Launder and dry on the hottest temperature setting.
Crib mattress	Weekly	Clean, disinfect and air dry

Play Areas and Surfaces	When	How
Dining table tops	Before and after meals	Clean, disinfect and air dry
Floors (e.g., tiles and vinyl)	Daily	Clean with soap and water
Carpets	Daily	Vacuum
Carpets	Twice per year	Steam clean
Small rugs	Twice weekly	Vacuum or launder

Toys	When	How
Toilet and Potty Chairs	When	How
Toilet bowls	Weekly	Clean with toilet bowl cleaner
Toilet seats and rims	Daily	Clean, disinfect and air dry.
Flushing handle, door knobs, counters and faucets	Daily	Clean, disinfect and air dry.
Potty chair	After each use	Clean, disinfect and air dry
Diaper change surface	After each use	Clean, disinfect and air dry.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play areas are attractive to unwanted visitors - human and animal. Hazards may be reduced by taking the following steps *BEFORE* children use the outdoor space:

- Do not assume that a fence will keep out unwanted visitors. Check the area for holes, spaces and gaps.
- Check your home play area for animal feces, ensure sheds are locked and gates are closed.
- If at a local park, check for animal feces, broken glass or cans, condoms, needles and syringes.
- If you have a sand box in your outdoor space at home, it must have a lid covering the entire space to prevent animal feces. Rake sand on a regular basis. Sunlight provides an effective protection against some microscopic contaminants.
- 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.



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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 adding 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
- pets are never left unsupervised in the play area
- ensure adults maintain and clean the animal's living quarters
- cat litter must be cleaned daily 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

Requirements for the Care of Animals in a Home Child Care Home

- 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.



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