

## Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Toys in Child Care Settings

According to [Caring for Our Children](#) routine cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting, keeping objects and surfaces in a child care setting as clean and free of pathogens as possible requires a combination of:

- A. Frequent cleaning
- B. When necessary an application of sanitizing or disinfecting

Task	Purpose
<b>Clean</b>	To remove dirt and debris by scrubbing and washing with a detergent solution and rinsing with water. The friction of cleaning removes most germs and exposes any remaining germs to the effects of a sanitizer or disinfectant used later.
<b>Sanitize</b>	To reduce germs on surfaces to levels considered safe by public health codes or regulations.
<b>Disinfect</b>	To destroy most germs on surfaces and objects, but not bacterial spores. Note: The term "germs" refers to bacteria, viruses, fungi and molds that cause infectious diseases.

Cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting products should not be used in close proximity to children, and adequate ventilation should be maintained during any cleaning, sanitizing or disinfecting procedure to prevent children and caregivers/ teachers from inhaling potentially toxic fumes.

When using bleach and water on surfaces, the time and concentrations required to effectively sanitize or disinfect vary. Ensuring the correct concentration is critical to ensuring that toxic residues do not remain and that the solution properly sanitizes/disinfects. In addition, the bleach solution should be made daily as the mixture starts to degrade once mixed and exposed to light. The below guidance is in accordance with [Center for Disease Control](#).

Surface	Mixture	Time Required
<b>Food Surfaces:</b> tables that children eat at, highchair trays, counters food is served, etc.	1/2 teaspoon bleach and 1 quart of water	The solution should be sprayed on and must remain on the surface for at least 2 minutes
<b>Surfaces in contact with bodily fluids:</b> changing tables, mats/cots that children may drool on or have toileting accidents, etc.	4 Tablespoon bleach and 1 quart of water	The solution should be sprayed on and must remain for at least 2 minutes.
<b>Toys:</b> Mouthed toys/Toys in classrooms with Infants and toddlers	1 teaspoon bleach and 1 gallon of water	Soaked for at least 5 minutes

### General guidelines for cleaning, sanitizing, and/or disinfecting toys in child care settings:

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used in child care settings.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion

- should be set aside until they are cleaned by hand with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized, and air-dried
- Play with plastic or play foods, play dishes and utensils, should be closely supervised to prevent shared mouthing of these toys.
- Indoor toys should not be shared between groups of infants or toddlers unless they are washed and sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
- All toys can spread disease when children put the toys in their mouths, touch the toys after putting their hands in their mouths during play or eating, or after toileting with inadequate hand hygiene.
- Small toys with **hard surfaces** (ex. plastic toys) can be set aside for cleaning by putting them into a dish pan labeled "soiled toys." This dish pan can contain soapy water to begin removal of soil, or it can be a dry container used to bring the soiled toys to a toy cleaning area later in the day. Having enough toys to rotate through cleaning makes this method of preferred cleaning possible
- Toys with **soft or porous surfaces** (ex. plush toys, wooden blocks, board books etc.) cannot be submerged in water or soaked in cleaning solutions. Instead the toys should be wiped with a cloth that has been soaked in warm soapy water to remove any debris. If there is dirt or grime in the grooves, use a scrub brush to remove. Allow the toy to dry completely and then wipe the toy with a cloth that has been soaked in a disinfecting solution (ex. bleach and water solution or another EPA approved disinfectant. Please note that when using EPA approved disinfectants, you should follow the manufacturer's instructions).

Age group	Frequency
Infants/Toddlers	<p>Since children this age are more likely to mouth toys, the frequency at which toys are cleaned and disinfected/sanitized should increase to reduce the spread of germs.</p> <p><b>Here are times when this should occur:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After all free play periods where children are using materials</li> <li>● Toys that are mouthed or touched after a child has placed their hands in their mouth should be removed once the child is done playing with it so that it can be cleaned and sanitized before being used by another child.</li> <li>● Rotate toys in for play so children still have options for play while materials that have become contaminated are removed for cleaning and sanitizing</li> <li>● At the end of the day</li> <li>● Pay attention to children as they play so that soiled toys can be collected and set aside for cleaning and sanitizing at the end of the day</li> </ul>
Preschool Age	<p>Preschool age children are less likely to mouth toys so the frequency at which toys would need to be cleaned and disinfected/sanitized is reduced. However, it is still important to clean and sanitize toys as they become soiled.</p> <p><b>Here are times when this should occur:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At the end of the day</li> <li>● Pay attention to children as they play so that soiled toys can be collected and set aside for cleaning and sanitizing at the end of the day</li> <li>● Toys should be collected and set aside: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After a child has placed a toy in their mouth or touched a toy after placing their hands in their mouth. The toy should be removed once the child is done playing with it so that it can be cleaned and sanitized before being used by another child.</li> <li>○ After the toy has come in contact with bodily fluids (sneezing, coughing, putting fingers in nose and then touching a toy, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## General guidelines to carry out sanitary diapering procedures:

For children in diapers or pull-ups, proper diapering procedures should be followed to make sure conditions are sanitary. [Caring for Our Children](#) provides step-by-step instructions on the proper diapering procedure.

### Cleaning and disinfecting the diapering surface/area

- C. Clean the diapering surface/area by spraying it with a soapy water solution and drying with a paper towel or by wiping it with a water-saturated paper towel or wipe.
- D. Disinfect the diapering surface by spraying it with a bleach-water solution (1 Tablespoon bleach and 1 quart of water) and wait at least 2 minutes before wiping (or allow to air dry). Another EPA approved disinfectant, used according to manufacturer's directions can be used instead of bleach and water.

## Safe and Healthy Diapering to reduce the spread of germs

Keep a hand on the child for safety at all times!



- **1. PREPARE**
  - Cover the diaper changing surface with disposable liner.
  - If you will use diaper cream, dispense it onto a tissue now.
  - Bring your supplies (e.g., clean diaper, wipes, diaper cream, gloves, plastic or waterproof bag for soiled clothing, extra clothes) to the diapering area.
- **2. CLEAN CHILD**
  - Place the child on diapering surface and unfasten diaper.
  - Clean the child's diaper area with disposable wipes. Always wipe front to back!
  - Keep soiled diaper/clothing away from any surfaces that cannot be easily cleaned. Securely bag soiled clothing.
- **3. REMOVE TRASH**
  - Place used wipes in the soiled diaper.
  - Discard the soiled diaper and wipes in the trash can.
  - Remove and discard gloves, if used.
- **4. REPLACE DIAPER**
  - Slide a fresh diaper under the child.
  - Apply diaper cream, if needed, with a tissue or a freshly gloved finger.
  - Fasten the diaper and dress the child.
- **5. WASH CHILD'S HANDS**
  - Use soap and water to wash the child's hands thoroughly.
  - Return the child to a supervised area.
- **6. CLEAN UP**
  - Remove liner from the changing surface and discard in the trash can.
  - Wipe up any visible soil with damp paper towels or a baby wipe.
  - Wet the **entire surface** with disinfectant; make sure you read and follow the directions on the disinfecting spray, fluid or wipe. Choose disinfectant appropriate for the surface material.
- **7. WASH YOUR HANDS**
  - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.