



CLEANING AND DISINFECTING IN CHILDCARE AND SCHOOL SETTINGS

Both **cleaning and disinfection** in childcare and school settings helps prevent the transmission of infection within the facility's environment. Keep premises, equipment, and hands as clean as possible at all times.

Cleaning

Cleaning is the physical removal of visible dirt, dust and organic matter from objects using detergent, warm water and friction. The cleaning process also helps to physically remove microorganisms (germs) from surfaces, but does not kill those that may remain.

Cleaning is an important first step in removing disease-causing germs from the child care environment. If surfaces are not "cleaned," persistent dirt and organic matter can coat and protect microbes and may cause further heat or chemical disinfection processes to be ineffective.

Disinfection

This is the process that inactivates disease-causing germs, usually by applying a chemical solution. This process does not destroy all bacterial spores. A commonly used solution is chlorine bleach and water.

Method

- 1) Clean all articles first with soap and warm water, apply friction.
- 2) Rinse with clear water.
- 3) Follow with a disinfectant - see recipe (in chart) or use according to manufacturer's recommendations. The solution can be mixed and placed in spray bottles to apply to surfaces.
- 4) To be effective, disinfectants must remain in contact with the surface for at least 10 minutes or as directed by manufacturer.
- 5) Most disinfectants do not need to be rinsed off the surface/equipment – they can be left to air dry.
- 6) Damp, rather than dry dusting or sweeping should be done whenever possible.
- 7) Cleaning and disinfecting should be carried out from the least soiled areas to the heaviest soiled areas.

Low level disinfection may be used for routine housekeeping of environmental surfaces and equipment.

High level disinfection is used to prevent the spread of diseases during exposure to blood or body fluids and during gastroenteritis outbreaks.

Manufacturer's specifications for concentration and exposure times must be followed.

Directions for Preparing and Using Chlorine-based Disinfectants

Product = Household Bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite – 50,000ppm)

Intended Use	Dilution	Minimum Contact Time
Food surfaces (low level disinfection)	1 part bleach to 200 parts water (ie: 5 ml bleach to 1 litre water) (200 ppm) *During gastroenteritis outbreaks use 1 part bleach to 50 parts water (1000 ppm). To be used in washroom as well (high level disinfection)	Surface to remain wet for 5 minutes.
Surface disinfection or soaking items (low level disinfection)	1 part bleach to 50 parts water (1000 ppm)	Surface to remain wet for 5 minutes.
Clean blood spills, body fluids (high level disinfection)	1 part bleach to 9 parts water (5000 ppm). Use gloves for cleanup.	Surface to remain wet for 10 minutes.

Remember to:

- 1) Make fresh bleach solution daily.
- 2) Store ready-for-use in a labeled bottle.
- 3) Store cleaning products out of the reach of children in a separate locked area or cabinet.

(over)

Infant /Toddler Toys

- Clean and disinfect toys that have had contact with the child's mouth on a daily basis, using an appropriate disinfecting solution. A cleaning and spray technique or an immersion technique can be used. If possible, these toys can be placed in a dishwasher.
- Disinfect 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 disinfecting solution may be used. If the toys are visibly soiled, clean the item prior to disinfecting.
- Machine wash soft, cuddly (plush) toys weekly or more often if required
- Clean all larger toys, activity centres, and toy storage shelves on a weekly basis.



Toys for Pre-School 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 disinfected between each child's use, or encourage the parents to supply their child with their own equipment.

Dress-Up Clothes

- Dress-up clothing needs to be laundered weekly
- Sharing of hats is not recommended.

Cleaning Schedule

More Than Once a Day:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean and disinfect surfaces such as faucet handles and toilet seats after every use.• Clean and disinfect potty chairs after every use.• Clean and disinfect high chairs and trays after every meal or snack.
Once a Day:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using soap and warm water, wash and rinse all surfaces that infants and toddlers are likely to touch.• Wash and disinfect crib rails, hard-surfaced toys and other mouth objects.• Wash mattress covers and bed linens if children do not use the same cot every day.• Wash and disinfect the water play equipment.
Once a Week:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean and disinfect floors, low shelves, door knobs and other surfaces likely to be touched by infants and toddlers.• Wash mattress covers, blankets and bed linens if child uses same one every day.• Wash stuffed toys in automatic washing machine.
Once a Month:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean and disinfect vaporizers or humidifiers.

References:

1. CDR (vol 2458) December 1998; Infection Control Guidelines for Handwashing, Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilizing in Health Care.
2. PIDAC Best Practices for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization in all Health Care Settings (April 30/06)
3. APIC Guidelines for Disinfection & Sterilization in Health Care Facilities, November/08.
4. Day Care Act, January, 1980.
5. BC Infection Control Guidelines, A Guide to Selection & Use of Disinfectants, 2003.