

Early Childcare Settings Cleaning and Disinfecting Guide

Keeping early care and education (ECE) settings clean helps prevent harmful germs from spreading among children and staff.



Cleaning



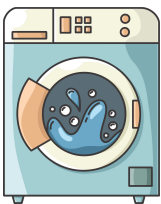
It is important to follow standard cleaning procedures in early childcare settings. **To clean surfaces, use a product that is suitable for each surface and follow the instructions on the product label.** Clean visibly dirty surfaces, including lunch tables or craft areas. Clean daily and after a meal or activity. In situations involving vomit or diarrhea, certain absorbent materials, such as kitty litter, can be beneficial to minimize aerosol transmission risk of norovirus.

FOR HARD SURFACES, SUCH AS CERTAIN TOYS, HIGH-CHAIR TRAYS, AND FLOORS:



- **Clean surfaces with soap and water or with cleaning products** appropriate for use on these surfaces.

FOR SOFT SURFACES, SUCH AS CLOTHING, CLOTH TOYS, AND RUGS:



- **Clean the surface with cleaning products** appropriate for use on these surfaces.
- **Launder items** (if possible) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- **Vacuum surfaces**, such as carpets and rugs, and dispose of the dirt safely.



Sanitizing

WHEN TO SANITIZE

You may need to sanitize some surfaces and objects after each use.



Sanitize objects and surfaces that an infant or child may use, such as infant feeding items, toys, and play surfaces.



Sanitize surfaces using a product suitable for each surface, following instructions on the product label.

HOW TO MIX YOUR OWN SANITIZER SOLUTION:

A weakened bleach solution is bleach diluted in water. If you cannot boil or steam items to sanitize them, consider using a weakened bleach solution.



1. Prepare a bleach solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented bleach per gallon (16 cups) of water in a clean wash basin.
2. Put items completely underwater. Make sure the solution touches all parts and there are no air bubbles.
3. Soak items for at least 2 minutes.
4. Remove with clean hands or tongs. Do not rinse because germs could get back onto the sanitized items. Any remaining bleach will break down quickly as it dries and will not hurt children.

A stronger bleach solution (5-25 tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water) with increased contact time (5 minutes) is necessary for norovirus.

Get more information on [sanitizing with bleach](#).

Sanitizing



HOW TO SANITIZE SAFELY

You may not need to sanitize surfaces and objects daily if they are cleaned carefully after use. To sanitize a surface or object, use a weakened bleach solution, an EPA-registered sanitizing spray, or a dishwasher.

For cloth materials, such as bibs, placemats, napkins, and tablecloths:



- Launder or wash, rinse, and sanitize after each meal.
- Sanitize fabric articles by machine-washing and drying them after each use.

For nonporous objects, such as certain toys and infant feeding items:



- Sanitize items by either boiling, steaming, or using a weakened bleach solution. Check with the item's manufacturer about which method to use. A dishwasher with a sanitizing cycle can be used for some items.
- After sanitizing, place items on a clean, unused dish towel or paper towel and allow to air dry completely before storing or using.
- Use only clean dish towels to pat items dry to avoid transferring germs to the items.

For hard surfaces, such as highchair trays, plates, and food preparation areas:



- Clean highchair trays, plates, and countertops with hot, soapy water.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize highchair trays just before and right after they are used for eating.
- Children who eat at tables should have disposable or washed and sanitized plates for their food.
- Sanitize any surface that has been touched or contaminated, using sanitizing products.

Disinfecting

WHEN TO DISINFECT

To disinfect, clean the surface with soap and water first. Then use an EPA-registered disinfecting product or a diluted bleach solution.



Some areas in early care and education settings, such as bathrooms and diaper changing tables, should be regularly disinfected.

Immediately clean surfaces and objects that are visibly soiled. If surfaces or objects are soiled with body fluids or blood, use gloves and other standard precautions to avoid coming into contact with the fluid. Remove the fluid and then clean and disinfect the surface.



Use disinfecting wipes on electronic items that are touched often, such as phones and computers. Pay close attention to the directions for using disinfecting wipes. *You may need to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the stated length of contact time.* **Follow manufacturer's instructions and recommendations for cleaning electronics. Use disinfectant products safely.**

Disinfecting



SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR USING CHEMICAL DISINFECTANTS:

- **Always read and follow the directions** on the product label to make sure you use and dispose of the disinfectant safely.
- **Leave the disinfectant on the surface long enough to kill the germs.** This is referred to as the “contact time.” You can find the contact time in the directions. The surface should stay wet during the entire contact time to make sure germs are killed.
- **Wear the recommended protective equipment** (for example, gloves or goggles) to protect your skin and eyes from potential splashes.
- **Do not mix cleaners and disinfectants** unless the labels indicate it is safe to do so. Combining certain products (such as chlorine bleach and ammonia cleaners) can result in serious injury or death.
- **Ensure good ventilation** if using products indoors. For example, use a fan or open windows and doors to allow fresh air to enter.
- Ensure that custodial staff, teachers, and others who use cleaners and disinfectants **read and understand all instruction labels** for safe and appropriate product use.
- **Store and use chemicals out of reach of children.**
- Immediately after disinfecting, **wash your hands** with soap and water for 20 seconds (sing happy birthday twice).

Click [here](#), or scan the QR code to see a list of EPA-registered disinfectants.

