MAINTAINING SANITARY CONDITIONS

WHY Sanitizing and Disinfecting are important:

Diseases such as gastrointestinal illnesses are spread in group care and education settings and can be reduced by consistent use of basic sanitary procedures for meals/snacks and diapering/toileting and throughout the space used with children.

The health policies found in the scales are based on national standards to minimize the spread of germs. Following these practices to the best of your ability is crucial for keeping the staff, children, and the larger community healthy. For more information, please see: Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Edition (CFOC3) on ncrkids.org.

WHICH Sanitizer/Disinfectant to choose:

Programs are required to choose either the recommended bleach and water solution (see details below) or an EPA registered alternative (see details below) to sanitize and disinfect when needed. The recommended bleach and water solution will both sanitize and disinfect surfaces and can be used in situations calling for a sanitizer or a disinfectant. If your program chooses to use an EPA registered alternative, be sure to distinguish whether the solution is a sanitizer or a disinfectant. It is always permissible to disinfect instead of sanitize, however there are some cases where surfaces must be disinfected instead of sanitized.

NOTE: Pay careful attention when disinfecting or sanitizing mouthed toys/surfaces. Strong chemicals in disinfectants are necessary to kill germs in bodily fluids, but may be harmful to young children if proper procedures are not followed. If using the bleach and water solution to disinfect, allow item or surface to air dry completely or sit for at least two minutes before returning to child. If using an EPA registered disinfectant, follow any manufacturer instructions which may include rinsing with water after disinfecting. It is always permissible to rinse items with water after full disinfection procedures have been followed and before returning item/surface to child’s environment.

HOW to Sanitize or Disinfect Effectively with Bleach Solution:

1. Spray the surface with a soap & water solution (stored in a labeled spray bottle) and wipe dry with a paper towel to clean. Must use one paper towel per surface.

2. Spray the surface with a bleach & water solution (stored in a correctly labeled spray bottle), covering the entire surface, allowing it to air dry for at least 10 seconds (2 minutes is best practice but not required) then wipe with a paper towel if needed. Must use one paper towel per surface. The surface cannot be sprayed and immediately wiped.

Note: Bleach and water solution should not be sprayed while children are close. This is a major safety hazard.

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1 From Caring for Our Children, Appendix J p 441 Note: Mouthed toy 2 minute air dry time differs from 10 second air dry time required for sanitizing/disinfecting other surfaces (see procedure on next page)
**Bleach & Water Solution** is only effective against germs if it is mixed properly and made **fresh daily**. The formula for mixing these components must be listed on each bottle used with one of these options below. Anything that differs from this will **not** be acceptable for credit on the ERS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formula</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Tb. bleach to 1 qt. water</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 tsp. bleach to 32 oz. water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ Tb. bleach to 16 oz. water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ½ tsp. bleach to 16 oz. water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon water</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Tips:** Use a new spray bottle that has not had a previous cleaner in it. Old bottles may be marked “Keep out of reach of children” and are considered a safety hazard if not locked away. Bleach and water solution should be kept out of easy reach of children when not in use but does not have to be locked away if mixed properly. Bottles must be sealed with a cap.

**HOW to Sanitize or Disinfect Effectively with EPA Registered Alternatives to Bleach and Water Solution:**

1. Clean the surface with a soap & water solution (stored in a labeled spray bottle) and wipe dry with a paper towel. Must use one paper towel per surface.
2. Spray the surface with an EPA registered sanitizer or disinfectant (whichever is appropriate), covering the entire surface, and follow all relevant manufacturer directions. If wiping with a paper towel, must use one paper towel per surface.

**An EPA Registered sanitizer or disinfectant** may be used for meals/snacks and weekly sanitizing cots/mats/mattresses. However, only an EPA-registered **disinfectant** (not sanitizer) may be used for diapering/toileting and cleaning up bodily fluids including accidents that occur on nap equipment. These alternative solutions must be used according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Only an EPA-registered solution is an acceptable alternative to the bleach & water solution. Programs must provide EPA documentation and full manufacturer written instructions for use when using registered EPA sanitizers/disinfectants. These documents are to be submitted with an ERS request. If documents are not received in advance, credit will not be given on the ERS.

The following must be listed on the spray bottle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of solution &amp; EPA number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanitizer or disinfectant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time before wiping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other relevant instructions for use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHAT and WHEN to Sanitize/Disinfect:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eating Surfaces</th>
<th>Tables and highchair trays used as eating surfaces should be cleaned and then sanitized or disinfected <strong>before</strong> and <strong>after</strong> being used for meals and snacks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-If food is served directly on a <strong>highchair tray</strong>, the tray must be made of plastic, be in good repair, and disinfected between use with the proper 3 step process (food should not be placed directly on a table surface as it cannot be cleaned using the three step process).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Three Step Process</strong>² <em>(for full instructions, see Infectious Diseases In Childcare Settings)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² From Infectious Diseases in Childcare Settings, 2nd ed., Food Safety and Sanitation, p 24

**Step 1:** Wash with soap and hot water  
**Step 2:** Rinse in hot water  
**Step 3:** Rinse in bleach and hot water (1 ½ Tb. Bleach per gallon of water)

*Other considerations for meals/snacks:*  
- After children wash hands for meals/snacks, there must be no contact with the trash can, walls, railings, floors, toys, or other dirty/unwashed surfaces; this can contaminate the table  
- Table surfaces should not have items/nametags taped to them; this prevents proper sanitation procedures  
- If snack is conducted as a choice during free play (rotating basis) the table must be sanitized after each child leaves and before the next child sits down at the same spot  
- Food that has fallen on floor must be cleaned up so children cannot eat it  
- Disposable supplies should not be reused

| Sinks          | To sanitize or disinfect the same sink: the sink, handles, and faucet must be sprayed following the two-step sanitizing/disinfecting procedure.  
|               | - If the same sink is used for both **diapering/toileting** and any other purpose, it must be disinfected after diapering/toileting before using it for anything else.  
|               | - If a sink that is used for **food preparation** (ex. washing fruit, cutting food, making bottles, mixing cereal, or other assembly of ingredients) has been used for any other purpose, it must be sanitized or disinfected before using the sink for food preparation. |

| Nap Mats/Cots/Mattresses | **Napping equipment** (cot, mattress, mat, etc.) must be sanitized or disinfected at least weekly, and must be disinfected whenever it becomes contaminated with bodily fluids, and before being assigned to another child.  
|                          | *Other considerations for nap:*  
|                          |   - If cots/mats are stored with sleeping surfaces touching each other, they must be disinfected after each use.  
|                          |   - Sheets and blankets or other bedding must be cleaned at least weekly and when needed due to accidents.  
|                          |   - Nap mats/cots/mattresses should be made of a non-absorbent material that is easy to wipe clean and should be covered in material that is easy to clean (sheets)  
|                          |   - Equipment must be labeled with child’s name or code. |
### Diapering/Toileting

**Diapering Surfaces/Floors** that become contaminated must be disinfected. For example, if a pad on the floor is used as a diapering surface, soiled diaper cannot be placed on floor unless floor is disinfected afterwards (carpet cannot be properly disinfected at all). A plastic bag can be used to place the diaper in before proper disposal as long as it does not contaminate other areas. If the bag is placed on the floor, the floor must be properly disinfected afterwards.

**Potty chairs** are not recommended, and if used cannot score above minimal standards. If used, must be disinfected in a separate sink that is used only for that purpose.

*Other considerations for diapering/toileting:*
- Ensure diapering surface is non-porous and can be disinfected – no fabric safety straps, no cloth quilted pads, no containers stored on diapering surface.
- Toys played with or objects touched while diapering/toileting must be put aside to be disinfected.
- Staff performing diapering/toileting procedures should not touch any other children, surfaces or materials until hands have been properly washed or contamination may occur.
- Disposable gloves, supplies should not be reused.

### Other Considerations

**Bodily Fluids:**
- Any area that has been contaminated by infant spit-up, saliva or other bodily fluids must be disinfected *immediately*. **Mouthing toys** must be removed and sanitized daily.
- Pacifiers and teethers used by only one child must be washed (with soap and water) before returning to the same child. Rinsing is not sufficient.

**Handwashing:**
- Use of hand dryers is permitted however recontamination is still a concern when turning off the sink faucet. It must be turned off with a disposable towel.

**Personal Hygiene:**
- Children should not share personal belongings such as combs & brushes.
- Children’s coats should not touch in cubbies to prevent the spread of lice.
- Toothbrushes must be stored to avoid contamination and shared toothpaste must be squeezed from the tube onto a disposable paper and then administered to the toothbrush.

**General Guidelines:**
- Sponges are not sanitary and will not be counted as using a sufficient method of cleaning surfaces.
- If washcloths are used in place of paper towels, they may only be used one time, on one surface, and then removed to be laundered.
- EPA registered sanitizing/disinfecting wipes may be used in place of spray solution. Use enough wipes to ensure that surface is visibly wet. Dispose of wipes afterwards. Wipes are for single use only and should not be used on multiple surfaces. Follow all manufacturer instructions.
- Outdoor sandboxes must be covered to prevent contamination.
- Food should not be used for art, in sand/water play, or to create musical instruments. It is not an appropriate substitute because it is unsanitary, confusing to children, and poses a conflict regarding use and waste of food.