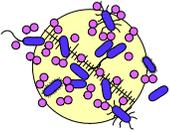


## Cleaning Toys is Important!



Germs can easily spread among children as they share toys. Choose washable toys whenever possible.

Cleaning and sanitizing toys helps to prevent the spread of communicable disease in a child care setting. We recommend cleaning and sanitizing toys daily.

## Washing Toys is an Important First Step

Washing toys thoroughly with soap and detergent removes most dirt, grime, and saliva. It is the most important step in cleaning toys. Washing toys removes some, but not all of the germs.

## Sanitizing is the Second Cleaning Step

It is important to wash toys before sanitizing them. Toys with dirt and grime on them cannot be sanitized properly. To sanitize means to remove or kill most of the germs on an object or toy.

We recommend using unscented household chlorine bleach for sanitizing toys after they have been washed. Other sanitizers are allowed, but they must be used according to label's directions and appropriate test strips must be provided to assure proper sanitizing concentrations.

When used and stored properly, chlorine bleach solution is safe and effective. An example of the safety and effectiveness of chlorine as a sanitizer is its widespread use in swimming pools.

Chlorine evaporates off the toys so no residue remains. Mix a fresh solution each day. Use  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of unscented chlorine bleach to 1 quart ( $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce per gallon) of cool water. This assures that the sanitizing solution will have the desired concentration of 50-200 ppm of chlorine. Test strips should be used to verify the concentration.

Note: Do not mix chlorine bleach with other cleansers or chemicals. Mixing chlorine with ammonia will cause dangerous fumes. Only mix chlorine bleach with cool, fresh water.

## Recommended Procedures

As toys become dirty during the day, collect them in separate containers: one for cloth and stuffed toys and one for wood and plastic toys. Sorting the toys ahead of time will make it easier to wash and sanitize them. At the end of the day, or at a specified time, such as naptime, wash and sanitize the toys.

Toys used by infants and toddlers are frequently placed in their mouths, therefore must be cleaned and sanitized after each child's use. You can use a washing machine, dishwasher or wash them by hand.

### Washing Toys by Hand:

- Wash and scrub each toy with hot water and soap or detergent.
- Rinse well
- Immerse each toy in the sanitizing solution. Allow the toys to dry completely, preferably overnight before returning to the classroom.

## Washing Toys in a Washing Machine

- Toys such as stuffed animals and play clothes can be washed in a washing machine.
- Use the hot water cycle and laundry detergent.
- Dry toys completely in a dryer or air-dry overnight. (Air-drying stuffed toys may take longer)
- You do not need to immerse or wipe toys with a sanitizing solution if they are washed by machine.

## Washing Toys in a Dishwasher

- Some hard toys such as wood, plastic, or metal may be washed in a dishwasher.
- Run toys through the complete wash and dry cycle. Use top rack only.
- Use the proper amount of dishwasher detergent recommended by the manufacturer.
- You do not need to use a sanitizing solution with toys washed in the dishwasher.

Sanitarians in the Care Facilities Program monitor childcare centers and group homes and respond to public complaints regarding those types of facilities.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**If you have any additional questions regarding toy sanitizing and safety, call 682-7400 and ask to speak with a Sanitarian who specializes in Child Care Health and Safety.**

Information in this brochure is in accordance with the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations.



*Visit our Internet site:*  
[www.dupagehealth.org](http://www.dupagehealth.org)

**DuPage County Health Department**

# Clean Toys Help Prevent Disease

## Guidelines for Child Care Facilities



## Care Facilities Program

DuPage County Health  
Department

[www.dupagehealth.org](http://www.dupagehealth.org)