

Special Considerations: Disinfecting and Sanitizing



Young children learn about their world by exploring, touching, and playing. Typically, this means that a toy will likely end up in a child's mouth at some point. During COVID-19, it is important that early childcare educators take the time to disinfect and sanitize everything. Unfortunately, the way this virus spreads play perfectly into how young children explore and play. Here are some suggestions to help support your sanitizing and disinfecting efforts:

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used. Examples are sensory bins, sand and water tables, play dough, clay, etc.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated should be set aside until they are cleaned. Clean with water and detergent, rinse, sanitize with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry. You may also clean in a mechanical dishwasher.
- Machine washable cloth toys should be used by one child at a time or should not be used at all. These toys should be washed before being used by another child.
- Do not share toys with other groups of infants or toddlers, unless they are washed and sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
- Set aside toys that need to be cleaned. Place in a dish pan with soapy water or put in a separate container marked for "soiled toys." Try to have enough toys so that the toys can be rotated through cleanings.
- Children's books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.
- Use bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags) that can be washed. Keep each child's bedding separate and store in individually labeled bins or bags. Cots and mats should be labeled for each child. Bedding should be cleaned weekly or before use by another child.
- Go outside as often as possible and open the windows more often.

Please check your local municipal and county health directives for additional guidance.



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