MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

Child Care Program General Guidance

Standard Precaution and Child Care Environmental Safety Child Care Guidance

This document provides recommendations for use child care programs about prevention strategies for decreasing transmission of infectious diseases and child care Environmental Safety. In line with guidance from the CDC, https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/cleaning/facility, the child care programs should follow standard precaution and environmental safety recommendation to promote health and safety of the children and staff as part of their normal operations.

I. Standard Precautions

Standard Precautions are the minimum infection prevention practices.

Standard Precautions include

1. Hand hygiene: Hand hygiene is the most important measure to prevent the spread of infections. Regular handwashing is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way .The child care staff/providers must teach the correct hand washing technique and practice with children to guide them when and how to wash the hands https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html
2. Use of personal protective equipment: These include gloves, facemasks, protective eyewear, face shields, and protective clothing (e.g., reusable or disposable gown, jacket, laboratory coat).
3. Respiratory hygiene / cough etiquette: Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette infection prevention measures are designed to limit the transmission of respiratory pathogens spread by droplet or airborne routes.
4. Sharps safety: All used disposable syringes and needles, scalpel blades, and other sharp items should be placed in appropriate puncture-resistant containers located close to the area where they are used. Sharps containers should be disposed of according to state and local regulated medical waste rules.
5. Clean and disinfected environmental surfaces: Policies and procedures for routine cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces should be included as part of the infection prevention plan.

II. Child Care Environmental Safety

1. Cleaning, Sanitation, Disinfection

Keeping a clean and sanitary child care environment is one of the most important defenses against the spread of illness or infection among children and providers.

a. Cleaning: Cleaning is done with water, soap, and scrubbing. Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning alone removes most types of harmful germs (like viruses, bacteria, parasites, or fungi) from surfaces. In most situations, cleaning regularly is enough to prevent the spread of germs. Use of commercial cleaners that contain soap or detergent decreases the number of germs on surfaces and reduces risk of infection from surfaces.

The child area needs to be maintained clean and germs free at all times that would require different cleaning frequency based on the use .The frequently touched surfaces continue to collect dirt and germs and would require continued cleaning to the visible dirty and soiled surfaces that require immediate cleaning. Immediate and ongoing cleaning exposures to hazardous and dangerous products including disease spread germs, and injury risks.

Always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after cleaning

Cleaning schedule examples:

1) **Instant/immediate Cleaning**: Area that is visibly dirty or soiled must be immediately cleaned and dried. Limit the access to children to the visibly dirty or soiled area. The child care provider must make sure to clean and dry the area completely to ensure safety, illness and injury prevention.
2) **Frequent Cleaning**: High-touch surfaces such as pens, counters, shopping carts, door handles, stair rails, elevator buttons, touchpads, restroom fixtures, and desks. Educate and designate a staff member to ensure that the child care area and surfaces are kept clean at all times.
3) **Regular Cleaning:** Hard and soft surfaces used for child care purpose require regular cleaning.
    - The examples for hard surface include counters, light switches, desks, and floors.
    - The examples for soft surfaces include carpet, rugs, and drapes: clothing, towels, and linens. It is recommended to regularly vacuum these surfaces, dispose the waste and dirt safely, and clean the surfaces with use of a product containing soap, detergent, or appropriate cleaner product.

4) **Outdoor areas, such as patios and sidewalks:**
    - It is not necessary and recommended to spray clean or disinfect the low touch outdoor surfaces such as on sidewalks, roads, or groundcover and wooden surfaces such as wood play structures, benches, and tables
    - Clean the visibly dirty high-touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars, play structures, and railings.

b. Sanitation: Though cleaning may remove the dirt and many germs, some surfaces would present health risk due to the quantity of germs present and their ability to multiply and spread through multiple ways. Sanitizing **r**educes the remaining germs on surfaces after cleaning. To sanitize a surface or object, use a weaker bleach solution or an EPA-registered sanitizing spray.

Examples of surfaces and objects that may need to be sanitized after they are cleaned.

- Sanitize objects and surfaces that an infant or child may use, such as infant feeding items, toys, and play surfaces.
- Sanitize food contact surfaces
- Sanitize inside of your refrigerator if you have a recalled food item or spoiled /expired food items.
- Sanitize surfaces using a product suitable for each surface, following instructions on the product label.
- Sanitize nonporous objects, such as certain toys and infant feeding items either boiling, steaming or using a weaker bleach solution. Follow the manufacturer instruction for cleaning and sanitizing the child care items. A dishwasher with a sanitizing cycle can be used for some items.
- Sanitize the hard surfaces, such as kitchen counters and food preparation areas by Cleaning with hot, soapy water and then sanitize using a homemade bleach solution or sanitizing products

For more information on food safety, please visit CDC's Food Safety page.

c. Disinfection: Disinfectant products approved by EPA can kill harmful germs that remain on surfaces after cleaning and sanitizing. By killing germs on a surface after cleaning, disinfecting can further lower the risk of spreading disease. Disinfecting products are chemicals that work by killing any remaining germs on surfaces.

Use an EPA-registered disinfecting product for the specific harmful germ (such as viruses or bacteria) if known. Not all disinfectants are effective for all harmful germs. Clean the surface with soap and water first. Always read the label on disinfecting products to make sure the products can be used on the type of surface you are disinfecting (such as a hard or soft surface, food contact surface, or residual surface).

Follow these important safety guidelines when using chemical disinfectants:

- Open doors and windows and use fans or HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) settings to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wear the recommended protective equipment (for example, gloves or goggles) to protect your skin and eyes from potential splashes, as recommended
- After you apply the disinfectant to the surface, leave the disinfectant on the surface long enough to kill the germs. The surface should stay wet during the entire contact time to make sure germs are killed.
- Follow the manufacturer/ product instructions to use or dilute.
- Do not mix products or chemicals with each other, as this could be hazardous and change the chemical properties.
- Clearly label all cleaning or disinfection solutions.
- Store and use chemicals out of the reach of children and animals.
- Do not eat, drink, or breathe cleaning or disinfection products into your body or apply directly to your skin. These products can cause serious harm.
- Do not wipe or bathe pets with any disinfection products.
- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds immediately after disinfecting,
- See EPA's Cleaning and Disinfecting Best Practices

2. Cleaning and Disinfecting With Bleach

https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/cleaning/disinfecting-bleach.html

When the EPA approved commercially available disinfectant product is not available, the child care program may choose Bleach solution to use on many surfaces. Bleach solution is effective at killing germs when properly diluted, and used. The surfaces must be cleaned with soap or detergent before disinfecting with household bleach.

Safety guidelines when using bleach products:

- Use regular unscented household bleach.
- Most household bleach contains 5%–9% sodium hypochlorite.
- Do not use a bleach product if the percentage is not in this range or is not specified. Laundry bleach or splashless bleach are not appropriate for disinfection.
- Follow the directions on the bleach bottle for preparing a diluted bleach solution.
- If the bottle does not have directions, make a bleach solution by mixing:
    - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of room temperature water(or)
    - 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of room temperature water
- Follow the label directions on the bleach product.
- Check to see if you need to wear any protective equipment, such as gloves or eye protection.
- **Never** mix household bleach (or any disinfectants) with any other cleaners or disinfectants. This can release vapors that may be very dangerous to breathe in.

- Make sure you have good ventilation while using bleach products indoors (for example, open windows and doors to allow fresh air to enter).
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for applying the bleach solution to surfaces.
- If instructions for application and use are not available, leave the diluted bleach solution on the surface for at least 1 minute before removing or wiping. This is known as the "contact time" for disinfection.
- The surface should remain visibly wet during the contact time(1 minute)
- Make a new diluted bleach solution daily.
- Diluted bleach solutions will not be effective after being mixed with water for over 24 hours.
- Wash hands after cleaning or disinfecting.

Child Care Responsibility:

1. Establish policies and procedures for routine cleaning and disinfection of childcare surfaces.
2. Clean and disinfect surfaces with an EPA-registered.

    a. Follow manufacturer instructions for use of cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants (e.g., amount, dilution, contact time, safe use, and disposal).

Develop and train the child care staff on routine cleaning ,sanitation and disinfection schedule as per the child care requirements(COMAR), CDC's Best Practice Recommendations https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/cleaning/facility.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fdisinfecting-building-facility.html,and Caring for Children guidance https://nrckids.org/files/appendix/AppendixK.pdf .

The programs can hire cleaning company/personnel to carry out the regular cleaning routines. It is recommended to use commercial cleaners that contain soap or detergent for the expected results.

3. Handling, Storing, and Disposing of Hazardous Materials and Biological Contaminants

a. ***Chemicals Used to Control Odors Prohibited in child care.***
Chemicals that are sold to cover up noxious odors or ward off pests and are hazardous. As an alternative, caregivers/teachers should remove the source of noxious odors to the extent possible by dissipating noxious odors through cleaning and ventilation (e.g., opening windows) and controlling pests using nontoxic methods. Toilet/urinal deodorizer blocks commonly contain para-dichlorobenzene (PDCB), a toxic chemical, designated as a possible human carcinogen that has no cleaning function. These deodorizers only serves to mask odors that should be eliminated by proper cleaning.

Prohibited **Chemicals Used to Control Odors:**

a. Incense;
b. Moth crystals or moth balls;
c. Air fresheners or sanitizers (both manmade and natural, e.g. essential oils); and
d. Toilet/urinal deodorizer blocks

Action: Contact the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional offices listed in the federal agency section of the telephone directory for assistance in identifying hazardous products.

b. ***Prohibition of Poisonous Plants***
Poisonous or potentially harmful plants are prohibited in any part of a child care facility that is accessible to children. All outdoor plants and their leaves, fruit, and stems should be considered potentially toxic. Cuttings, trimmings, and leaves from potentially harmful plants must be disposed of safely so children do not have access to them.

Action: All plants not known to be nontoxic should be identified and checked by name with the local poison center (1-800-222-1222) to determine safe use.For toxic, frequently ingested products and plants, see the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) Handbook of Common Poisonings in Children, available at http://www.aap.org.

c. ***Plastic Containers and Toys***
The facility should use infant bottles, plastic containers, and toys that do not contain Polyvinyl chloride (PVC), Bisphenol A (BPA), or phthalates.

Action: When possible, caregivers/teachers should substitute materials such as paper, ceramic, glass, and stainless steel for plastics.

d. Use of Play Dough and Other Manipulative Art or Sensory Materials.
The child care program should have written procedures on the use and life span of manipulative art or sensory materials such as clay play dough, etc. Hand hygiene, supervision of children, and discarding material that is contaminated are appropriate hygienic practices when using these materials.

Action: Provide children with their own portion of modeling material helps prevent cross-contamination

e. ***Proper Use of Art and Craft Materials***
Only art and craft materials that are approved by the Art and Creative Materials Institute (ACMI) should be used in the child care facility. The facility should prohibit use of unlabeled, improperly labeled old, or donated materials with potentially harmful ingredients. Materials should be age-appropriate. Children should not eat or drink while using art and craft materials.

Action: Caregivers/teachers should have emergency protocols in place in the event of an injury, poisoning, or allergic reaction. If caregivers/teachers suspect a poisoning may have

occurred they should call their poison center at 1-800-222-1222. Rooms should be well ventilated while using art and craft materials.

f. ***Carbon Monoxide Detectors***
Carbon monoxide detector(s) should be installed in child care settings when the program uses any sources of coal, wood, charcoal, oil, kerosene, propane, natural gas, or any other product that can produce carbon monoxide indoors or in an attached garage or if detectors are required by state/local law or state licensing agency.

Action: Facilities must meet state or local laws regarding carbon monoxide detectors. Detectors should be tested monthly. Batteries should be changed at least yearly. Detectors should be replaced at least every five years.

g. ***Presence of Toxic Substances***
Many cleaning products and art materials contain ingredients that may be toxic.

Action: Many cleaning products and art materials contain ingredients that may be toxic.

h. ***Use of a Poison Center***
Toxic substances could include medications, plants, berries or mushrooms, bites or stings, cleaning products, consumer products, and other chemicals. Exposure to toxic substances can happen if children swallow, inhale, or splash a product on their eyes or skin.

Action: The Poison Control phone number, **1-800-222-1222,** should be called for advice about any exposure to toxic substances or potential poisoning as soon as possible after exposure. f a child is unconscious, has a seizure, or is having trouble breathing, call 911 immediately.

i. ***Ventilation in Buildings***
The child care programs must regularly assess to ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space. Open windows and doors, when weather conditions allow, increasing outdoor airflow. Even a slightly open window can introduce beneficial outdoor air.

Action: Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to occupants in the building.

4. Prevention of Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids

NOTE: Always treat urine, stool, vomit, blood, and body fluids as potentially infectious. Always clean up spills of body fluid and sanitize contaminated surfaces immediately.

- For small amounts of urine and stool on smooth surface
  - Wipe off urine/stool and wash affected area with a detergent solution. Rinse the surface with clean water.
  - Apply a Strong Bleach Solution to the surface for at least the minimum required contact time.

- For larger spills on floors, or any spills on rugs or carpets:
    - Wear gloves while cleaning. Disposable gloves can be used, but household rubber gloves are adequate for all spills except blood and bloody body fluids
    - Disposable gloves (latex or vinyl – vinyl is less likely to cause an allergic skin reaction) should be used whenever blood may be present in the spill.
    - Take care to avoid splashing any contaminated material onto the mucous membranes of your eyes, nose or mouth, or into any open sores you may have.
    - Wipe up as much of the visible material as possible with disposable paper towels and carefully place the soiled paper towels and other soiled disposable material in a leak-proof, plastic bag – then securely tie or seal the plastic bag Use a wet/dry vacuum on carpets, if such equipment is available.
    - Immediately use a detergent, or a disinfectant-detergent to clean the spill area. Then rinse the area with clean water.
    - For blood and body fluid spills on carpeting, blot to remove body fluids from the fabric as quickly as possible. Then spot-clean the area with a detergent-disinfectant instead of a bleach solution.
    - Additional cleaning by shampooing or steam cleaning the contaminated surface may be necessary
    - Sanitize the cleaned and rinsed surface by wetting the entire surface with a Strong Bleach Solution.

  Dry the surface
    - Clean and rinse reusable household rubber gloves, then treat them as a contaminated surface in applying the Strong Bleach Solution to them.

      Remove, dry and store these gloves away from food or food surfaces. Discard disposable gloves.
- Mops and other equipment used to clean up body fluids should be:
    - Cleaned with detergent and rinsed with water,
    - Rinsed with a fresh batch of Strong Bleach Solution, Wrung as dry as possible, and Air-dried.
- Wash your hands afterward, even though you wore gloves.
- Remove and bag clothing items (yours and those worn by children) that have been soiled by body fluids.

Resources:

Situations that Require Hand Hygiene http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView

Prevention of Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView

Routine Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView

Environmental Audit of Site Location http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView

When and How to Clean and Disinfect Your Home
https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/cleaning/cleaning-your-home.html

Cleaning and Disinfecting with Bleach https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/cleaning/disinfecting bleach.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fhealthywater%2Fhygiene%2 Fdisinfecting-bleach.html

Selecting and Using Cleaning, Sanitizing, or Disinfecting Products

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/selecting-using-cleaning-sanitizing-or-disinfecting-products

Situations that Require Hand Hygiene http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView

Prevention of Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView

Routine Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView

Environmental Audit of Site Location http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView
Fresh Air http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView

Integrated Pest Management http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView
Use and Storage of Toxic Substances http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView
Standard 5.2.9.2: Use of a Poison Center http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView