



Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Frequency Table

Revised October 2015

Definitions	
Cleaningⁱ	Physically removing all dirt and contamination, oftentimes using soap and water. The friction of cleaning removes most germs and exposes any remaining germs to the effects of a sanitizer or disinfectant used later.
Sanitizingⁱⁱ	Reducing germs on inanimate surfaces to levels considered safe by public health codes or regulations. Sanitizing may be appropriate for food service tables, high chairs, toys, and pacifiers.
Disinfecting	Destroying or inactivating most germs on any inanimate object, but not bacterial spores. Disinfecting may be appropriate for diaper tables, door and cabinet handles, toilets, and other bathroom surfaces.
Germs	Microscopic living things (such as bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi) that causes disease.

Definitions adapted from American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2011. *Caring for Our Children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs*. 3rd edition. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association. See <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/WebFiles/AppendicesUpload/AppendixJ.pdf> for additional details.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Frequency Table (Referenced in guidance for Criteria 5.A.08, 5.C.01, 5.C.02, and 9.C.06)						
Areas	Before Each Use	After Each Use	Daily (End of the Day)	Weekly	Monthly	Comments
Food Areas						
Food preparation surfaces	Clean, Sanitize	Clean, Sanitize				Use a sanitizer safe for food contact
Eating utensils & dishes		Clean, Sanitize				If washing the dishes and utensils by hand, use a sanitizer safe for food contact as the final step in the process; use of an automated dishwasher will sanitize
Tables & highchair trays	Clean, Sanitize	Clean, Sanitize				
Countertops		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			Use a sanitizer safe for food contact
Food preparation appliances		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			
Mixed use tables	Clean, Sanitize					Before serving food
Refrigerator					Clean	
Toilet & Diapering Areas						
Changing tables		Clean, Disinfect				Clean with detergent, rinse, disinfect
Potty chairs		Clean, Disinfect				Use of potty chairs is not recommended, but if used should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
Handwashing sinks & faucets			Clean, Disinfect			
Countertops			Clean, Disinfect			



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Toilets			Clean, Disinfect			
Diaper pails			Clean, Disinfect			
Floors			Clean, Disinfect			Damp mop with a floor cleaner/disinfectant
Child Care Areas						
Plastic mouthed toys		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			
Pacifiers		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			Reserve for use by only one child; use dishwasher or boil for one minute
Hats			Clean			Clean after each use if head lice present
Door & cabinet handles			Clean, Disinfect			
Floors			Clean			Sweep or vacuum, then damp mop, (consider micro fiber damp mop to pick up most particles)
Carpets ⁱⁱⁱ and Large Area Rugs ¹			Clean		Clean	<i>Daily:</i> Vacuum ^{iv} when children are not present; clean with a carpet cleaning method consistent with local health regulations and only when children will not be present (until the carpet is dry) <i>Monthly:</i> Clean carpets at least monthly in infant areas and at least every three months in other areas when soiled
Small Rugs			Clean	Clean		<i>Daily:</i> Shake outdoors or vacuum <i>Weekly:</i> Launder
Machine washable cloth toys				Clean		Launder
Dress-up clothes				Clean		Launder
Play activity centers				Clean		
Drinking Fountains			Clean, Disinfect			
Computer keyboards ^v		Clean, Sanitize				Use sanitizing wipes, do not use spray
Phone receivers			Clean			
Sleeping Areas						



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Bed sheets & pillow cases				Clean		Clean before use by another child
Cribs, cots, & mats				Clean		Clean before use by another child
Blankets					Clean	

ⁱ Routine cleaning with detergent and water is the most useful method for removing germs from surfaces in the child care setting. Safer cleaning products are not only less-toxic and environmentally safer, but they also often cost the same as conventional cleaners. [Green Seal](#) and [UL/EcoLogo](#) are non-profit companies that research and certify products that are biodegradable and environmentally friendly.

ⁱⁱ Sanitizing and disinfecting can be achieved with a solution of bleach and water. **However**, the use of bleach for disinfecting and sanitizing is not a requirement; **there are other EPA-approved sanitizing and disinfecting agents. When purchasing products, look for an EPA registration number on the product label, which will describe the product as a cleaner, sanitizer, or disinfectant.**

When sanitizing or disinfecting is warranted, it is recommended that staff use the least-toxic disinfecting and sanitizing products available. Least-toxic disinfecting and sanitizing products have been tested and certified by a third party group. For alternative methods and products to be used in lieu of bleach, please refer to the [Green Cleaning Toolkit for Early Care and Education](#), a set of resources developed by the EPA.

Follow manufacturer instructions for how to mix bleach / water solutions for sanitizing and disinfecting. Refer to *Caring for Our Children*, Appendix J, (<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/WebFiles/AppendiceUpload/AppendixJ.pdf>) for instructions on how to identify EPA-registered cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting products (including bleach), and how to safely prepare bleach solutions.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is best practice to use alternatives to carpets in the childcare environment.

^{iv} **All area rugs and carpeted areas should be vacuumed with a HEPA filtered vacuum and according to instructions for the vacuum. Use proper vacuuming technique: (1) push the vacuum slowly; (2) do a double pass—vacuum in 2 directions, perpendicular to each other; (3) start at the far end of a room and work your way out (to avoid immediate re-contamination); (4) empty or replace vacuum bags when ½ to 2/3 full.**

^v Each Use” of computer keyboards should be defined as use by each group of children, not each individual child. Keyboards connected to computers should be cleaned daily if one group is in the room all day, or after each different group of children uses the room. These guidelines do not apply to keyboards that are unplugged and used for dramatic play.