

Guidelines for Cleaning Toys in Child Care Centres/Schools

CLEANING is the removal of visible dirt from a surface.

SANITIZING is done after cleaning to reduce the number of germs remaining on a surface to a safe level.

A surface cannot be properly sanitized until it has first been thoroughly cleaned.

- Choose toys that are washable, sturdy and large enough to avoid swallowing or choking.
- Choose toys that can be cleaned and sanitized.
- Stuffed toys should be machine-washable.
- Clean toys when visibly dirty and at least once a week. If toys are used a lot, clean them daily.
- Remove toys, that children have put in their mouths or that have other body fluids on them, from the play area until they can be cleaned.
- When cleaning toys, check them for sharp, jagged edges or small pieces that can be easily broken off. If toys cannot be fixed, throw them away.



Hard toys

There are multiple ways to clean hard toys:

- 1. Clean hard toys in a dishwasher with a sanitizer cycle.** Use dishwasher detergent to clean the toys. The heat of the sanitizer cycle will sanitize the toys.
- 2. Clean toys with dish soap and water. Rinse thoroughly, then sanitize** the toys with a mixture of one teaspoon (5 ml) household bleach (5% - 6% chlorine) in two cups (1/2 litre) of water. Allow the toys to air dry.
- 3. Clean toys with dish soap and water.** Wipe toys with a cloth soaked in a disinfectant or with a commercial disinfecting wipe. **Be sure to rinse the toys thoroughly in warm water to remove chemicals left behind; some chemicals are harmful to children.** Allow toys to air dry.

There are many disinfectants in stores. Make sure that the disinfectant you use is safe for children and follow the maker's instructions.

Stuffed toys

Clean stuffed toys in a washer with laundry soap. Dry in a dryer on a normal setting.

Water tables

Water tables can be a source of germs. Children can introduce germs when they put their hands into the water and take germs away when they take their hands out.

Children should wash their hands before and after playing at a water table. Change the water in water tables regularly. Fill with clean water in the morning. Drain at lunch time and refill for afternoon play.

Drain the water table at the end of the day, then clean and sanitize the table and the toys, as above.