

# Parent/Provider Newsletter

September 2019

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program provides resources to States, Territories and Tribal Lead Agencies that enable low-income parents to work or pursue education and training so that they can better support their families and promote the learning and development of their children. The CCDF Final Rule strengthens the requirements to protect the health and safety of children in child care; help parents make informed consumer choices and access information to support child development; provide equal access to stable child care for low-income children; and enhance the quality of child care and the early childhood workforce.

## How Should We Wash Our Hands?

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

## When Should You Wash Your Hands?

- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats

### Washing Hands Song

(Tune: Row Your Boat)

Wash, wash, wash, your hands,  
Soap will make them clean,  
Scrub the germs til they fall off,  
Germs go down the drain.



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According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. If clean, running water is not accessible, as is common in many parts of the world, use soap and available water. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

# Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting in Child Care

Keeping the child care environment clean is one of the best ways to help ensure that children stay healthy. Dirty toys, bedding, linens, eating utensils, and surfaces can carry and spread germs. Regular disinfecting should be a part of the routine in a child care setting.

Getting things clean and reducing the spread of germs requires two different steps:

1. **Washing the item, using soap and water.** Be sure to rinse thoroughly.

2. **Disinfecting the item.** Cleaning removes dirt but does not kill all germs. To be sure germs are gone, you must disinfect them as well. The most common ways of disinfecting are as follows:

- You can disinfect with a **bleach and water solution**. A solution of regular household bleach and water is an inexpensive and easy way

disinfect surfaces and objects in child care programs. The amount of bleach and water to use depends on the concentration of the bleach you choose. See [Disinfect Child Care Surfaces with a Bleach and Water Solution](#) for specific instructions on using bleach and water to disinfect.

- You can use your **dishwasher**. Durable plastic toys can be washed in the dishwasher. High water pressure and temperatures do a great job of removing germs.

- You can use your **washing machine**. Wash cloth toys, linens, and bedding in the washing machine. Add one-half cup of chlorine bleach to the wash cycle when washing colorfast material; for non-colorfast material, add one-half cup of non-chlorinated bleach.

Remember that disinfecting is included in most states' child care licensing regulations. *Different states have different rules* about disinfecting solutions, water temperatures, and the use of dishwashers. Check your [state child care licensing regulations](#) to learn more.

## **Be Cautious about Using Commercial Disinfectants**

Not all cleaning chemicals are safe and appropriate for use in a group child care setting. Here are some cautions to be aware of:

- Products that meet the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) standards for "hospital grade" germicides (solutions that kill germs) often are promoted for use in child care. But **many of these products are dangerous and potentially even toxic to children**. It is important to read product labels carefully.
- **Do not use cleaning products that carry a DANGER or a CORROSIVE label warning in your child care program.** Be cautious about commercial or industrial products that advertise themselves as "disinfectants," having "germicidal action," or being able to "kill germs." Often these products carry a warning label on the front of the container because they are toxic.

Before using anything other than a bleach and water solution for disinfecting, check with your child care nurse consultant or licensing agency to make sure it's acceptable for use in child care. If you do decide to use an EPA-approved industrial product as a sanitizer, carefully read the label and **always follow the manufacturer's instructions exactly**.

For More Information

To learn more about keeping the child care environment clean and safe, take a look at the following eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care articles:

[Disinfect Child Care Surfaces with a Bleach and Water Solution](#)  
[Hand Washing Tips for Child Care Providers](#)

[Simple Steps for Thorough Hand Washing in Child Care](#)

[https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-89334\\_63294\\_5529\\_49572\\_50051---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-89334_63294_5529_49572_50051---,00.html)

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