

Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting mean very different things and involve distinctly different solutions. Child care providers need to know the differences to apply the appropriate technique for the circumstance. Cleaning and sanitizing/disinfecting **can't** be done at the same time.

Cleaning *removes visible soil and debris.*

- **Method:** scrub, wash, and rinse. Always clean before sanitizing or disinfecting.
- **Cleaning solution:** detergent and water

Sanitizing *kills 99.9% of the germs on a surface. This makes it unlikely that someone touching the surface will contact germs and become ill.*

- **Method:** Cover the cleaned area with sanitizing solution. Leave the solution to air dry at least 2 minutes. Wipe dry, or let it air dry completely.
- **Sanitizing solution:** See the recipe below.

Disinfecting *kills nearly 100% of the germs on a surface. This is the solution to use for body fluid spills to eliminate the spread of bloodborne illnesses such as Hepatitis B and HIV. A stronger bleach solution is used for additional protection against communicable diseases.*

- **Method:** Cover the cleaned area with disinfecting solution. Leave the solution to air dry at least 2 minutes. Wipe dry, or let it air dry completely.
- **Disinfecting solution:** See the recipe below.

Household bleach mixed with water is recommended for disinfecting and sanitizing. Bleach leaves no harmful residue. The solution of bleach and water is easy to mix, nontoxic, safe if handled properly, and kills most infectious agents. When purchasing household bleach, make sure that the bleach concentration is for household use and unscented. Scented, powdered, splashless, or color-safe bleach should not be used. Household bleach is typically sold in retail stores in one of 2 strengths: 5.25% hypochlorite (regular strength bleach) or 6.00% hypochlorite (ultra strength bleach) solutions. Clorox bleach is the only brand of bleach EPA registered as a disinfectant and sanitizer, and is known to have the percentage of sodium hypochlorite printed on the label. If the bleach label does not state the percentage of sodium hypochlorite, it is best not to use it.

Recipes for Bleach Solution:

Disinfecting: (diaper area, bathrooms, floors, toys, etc.) (500-800 ppm)

- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp bleach / 1 cup lukewarm water
- 1 tablespoon bleach / 1 quart lukewarm water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bleach / 1 gallon lukewarm water

Sanitizing: (food contact surfaces, bottles, mouthed toys, etc.) (50-100 ppm)

- 1/16 tsp bleach / 1 cup lukewarm water
 - 1/4 teaspoon bleach / 1 quart lukewarm water
 - 1-2 teaspoons bleach / 1 gallon lukewarm water
- ** To make mixing easier, recommend preparing the larger amount and pouring into several bottles.
- ** Test with strip to ensure solution is 50-100 ppm

Rules for using bleach:

1. Must be mixed daily in order to be effective. Bleach solution loses its strength and is weakened by heat, sunlight, and organic matter (food, stool, etc.).
2. A surface or item must be cleaned with soap and water first.
3. The minimum contact time is 2 minutes.
4. After using bleach solution, the surface/item does not need to be rinsed, but should be dry before using.

Bleach solution can be applied in various ways:

- Spray bottle, for diaper changing surfaces, toilets, and sinks.
- Cloths rinsed in sanitizing for large toys, books, and activity centers.
- Dipping the object into a container filled with the bleach solution, for smaller toys.

If you choose to use another product other than bleach for sanitizing:

- product must be EPA approved
- read the label and always follow the manufacturer's instructions exactly
- contact the product company to request a MSDS (material safety data sheet) and keep it handy in case of accidental contact or ingestion
- before using anything other than bleach, please consult with your local public health inspector or child care health consultant

Caution:

Products such as Lysol Wipes, Mr. Clean Wipes, Lysol Disinfecting Spray, Clorox Clean-Up Cleaner with Bleach are **NOT** recommended to use. They kill germs, but the products leave a chemical residue on surfaces that could be harmful to children. Clorox Green Works Natural Cleaners do not leave a harmful residue, but are not approved to use because they do not kill germs. Norwex microfiber cloths are also not approved to use because they are not EPA registered.

- Clorox Disinfecting Wipes have been approved for use on diapering pads and in bathrooms only.
- Clorox Anywhere Hard Surface Sanitizing Spray has been approved for food contact surfaces only. It is not strong enough for diapering or bathrooms.

Remember:

Make sure all cleaning products, including bleach, are clearly labeled and out of the reach of children.

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Leading the Way for Child Care in North Dakota