

Cleaning & Disinfecting Toys



Infant and Toddler Toys

When an **infant or toddler** finishes playing with a toy, the toy should be retrieved from the play area and placed in a bin reserved for dirty toys. This bin should be out of the reach of children. Toys can be washed at a later, more convenient time, and then transferred to a bin for clean toys and safely reused by other children.

Children in diapers should only have washable toys. Each group of children should have their own toys.
Toys should not be shared with other groups.

Indoor toys shall not be shared between groups of infants or toddlers **unless** they are washed and disinfected before being moved from one group to the other.

Toys that cannot be washed and disinfected shall not be used for this age group.

Rationale: Children in this age group tend to mouth toys and contaminate toys with their secretions. Strict adherence to cleaning and disinfecting procedures helps reduce the spread of germs.

Instructions for Cleaning Indoor Toys Used by Infants and Toddlers:

- Step 1:** Set contaminated toys aside in a bin labeled "Dirty Toys" where children cannot access them until cleaned.
- Step 2:** Wash in clean soapy water (use a brush to clean crevices).
- Step 3:** Rinse under running water.
- Step 4:** Disinfect by soaking toys in a diluted bleach solution - ¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon of water or 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart of water for 10 to 20 minutes. **This time is specific for plastic toys.**
- Step 5:** Remove the toy from the bleach solution and rinse well in cool water.
- Step 6:** Air Dry

Hard plastic toys that are washed in a dishwasher, or cloth toys washed in the hot water cycle of a dishwasher,

do not need to be additionally disinfected.

Stuffed toys **used only by a single child** should be cleaned in a washing machine every week or more frequently if soiled.

Toys and Equipment Used by Older Children

Toys used by older children who do not mouth toys should be cleaned once a week and when obviously soiled.

Instructions for Cleaning Toys Used by Older Children:

- Step 1:** Soap and water wash.
- Step 2:** Rinse with water.
- Step 3:** Allow to air dry. **No disinfecting is required.** (These types of toys and equipment include blocks, dolls, tricycles, trucks and other similar toys).
- Step 4:** Clean and disinfect brushes used to clean toys.

Do not use wading pools, especially for children in diapers.

References:

American Academy Of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (2002). *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs, 2nd edition.* Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics and Washington, DC: American Public Health Association. Retrieved June 21, 2007 from <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/index.html>.

For more information, please contact the **Child Care Health Promotion Program** at 408.494.7414 or visit www.sccphd.org/childcare.

Informative Web sites include:

- www.nrc.uchsc.edu

Public Health Department

Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System

