

Training

You are required to provide yearly disaster/crisis training for your staff. You, your health consultant, or other qualified professionals can provide this training. It is important to document any training that takes place. Quarterly disaster drills and monthly fire drills must be held and documented. Documentation of the drills must be on file for the current year plus the previous calendar year.

Sample Disaster/Crisis Plan

A sample Disaster/Crisis Plan is included in Appendix B. The model plan was developed by the Snohomish County Health District Partners in Child Care. Its purpose is to give child care center personnel step-by-step procedures for responding to emergency situations during the first 30 minutes of the disaster. If staff are able to follow the instructions in the order they are written, it will help them to know what to do in each type of disaster or crisis. Check with your licenser for more information about developing a Disaster Plan. Additional resources include the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and your local public health department.

Note: Licensing requires you to train your staff annually on your disaster plan. You are also required to have written documentation that parents have read and reviewed your disaster plan upon enrollment.

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How do I maintain a clean and sanitized environment?

- Surfaces must be easily cleanable. A cleanable surface is one that is:
 - Designed to be cleaned frequently
 - Moisture-resistant, and
 - Free from cracks, chips or tears.
- Examples of cleanable surfaces include linoleum, tile, sealed wood, and plastic.
- You must maintain the building, equipment and premises in a clean and sanitary manner that protects the children from illness including but not limited to:
 - Ensure that floors around sinks, toilets, diaper change areas and potty chairs are moisture resistant and easily cleanable for at least twenty-four inches surrounding the surfaces, and
 - Take measures to control rodents, fleas, cockroaches, and other pests in and around the center premises such as:
 - Keep all trash and garbage cans tightly sealed
 - Screen open windows and doors
 - Seal and store food properly, and
 - Keep floors and other areas free from crumbs and food debris.
- Surfaces can be cleaned:
 - With any cleaning solution such as soap and water, cleanser or cleaning spray
 - With a concentration according to label directions, and
 - Rinsed as needed per label directions.
- You may use a bleach solution to sanitize the following areas:
 - Diapering areas
 - Surfaces exposed to body fluids
 - Bathrooms and bathroom equipment
 - Table tops
 - High chairs
 - Toys
 - Dishes
 - Floors, and
 - Sleeping mats.

- You may use a bleach solution or another solution intended for sanitizing if the department approves it. When you use a product other than bleach to sanitize, you must:
 - Follow the label directions for use including concentration, contact time and rinsing, and
 - Be sure that if you use the product on food contact surfaces and items that children might put into their mouths, the label states the product is safe for food contact surfaces.
- The following are surfaces that need to be cleaned and sanitized and a minimum schedule for that cleaning:
 - Tables and counters used for food serving and high chairs are cleaned and sanitized before and after each meal or snack
 - Sinks, counters and floors are cleaned and sanitized daily or more often if necessary
 - Refrigerators are cleaned and sanitized monthly or more often as needed
 - Bathroom (including sinks, toilets, counters and floors) are cleaned and sanitized daily and more often if necessary
 - Floors are swept, cleaned and sanitized daily.
 - Carpet is vacuumed at least daily and shampooed as needed but at least every six months
 - Toys that children place in their mouth are cleaned between use by different children
 - Infant and toddler toys are cleaned daily
 - Sleeping mats, cribs and other forms of bedding are cleaned between use by different children and at least weekly.
- Your health policies and procedures must describe your frequency for general cleaning, dusting, cleaning toys, toy shelves, and equipment.

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Cleaning and sanitizing equipment and toys

Cleaning and sanitizing are important steps in ensuring a healthy environment and in preventing the spread of illness. You need to have policies and routines for maintaining sanitary conditions at the center, and you need to train staff to follow your guidelines.

The younger the children in care, the more likely an object will go into their mouths. This means you clean and sanitize their objects and surfaces often. All mouthed toys must be cleaned and sanitized between uses. One method is to put mouthed toys in a plastic tub until they can be cleaned and sanitized as required as well as having sufficient mouthing toys for replacement and use.

It is important that you clean before you sanitize. Cleaning means washing with soap and water, then rinsing with clear water prior to applying a bleach solution. Do not apply a bleach solution to a soiled surface or a surface that has soap residue on it. If you do, it will not adequately sanitize the surface.

Formulas for Bleach Solutions

Disinfecting solution is a more concentrated solution and is used for diapering areas, bathrooms, kitchens, handwashing sinks, floors, and surfaces contaminated by body fluids: Use one-quarter (1/4) cup of bleach per gallon of water (or one tablespoon per quart). This solution is strong enough to kill germs quickly, but it still needs time to work. You must let the surface air-dry for a minimum of two minutes. Using a towel or sponge to dry the surface increases the chances of putting germs back on the cleaned surface. Bleach evaporates quickly, leaving no toxic residue.

Sanitizing solution is a less concentrated solution and is used for submerging dishware that has been cleaned, table tops, classroom counters and door-knobs, and toys that are mouthed by children. Use one tablespoon of bleach per gallon of water. For this less concentrated solution to do its job of killing germs, totally submerge objects in the solution for at least two full minutes. Allow the items to air dry.

You can make a quantity of a bleach solution ahead of time. Store it in a dated, labeled, airtight container. Empty out and refill spray bottles daily because chlorine bleach exposed to air loses its strength.

Floors

To clean and disinfect floors you can use a phenol-based product (such as Lysol, Pine Power, etc.). They are effective disinfectants, but they are more expensive and leave a residue that needs to be rinsed off. The more concentrated bleach solution is just as effective at disinfecting floors. It evaporates in air, leaving no residue. If you use a commercial disinfecting product, make sure to follow the directions about proper dilution and the length of time to leave on the surface.

Note: All sanitizers and disinfectants and their methods of use must be listed in your Health Policy and approved by your health consultant.

Floor Covering

Children enjoy having both hard and soft floor surfaces on which to walk, sit, and play. Messy play and activities that lead to soiling of floors is developmentally appropriate in all age groups, but especially among young children (the same age group that is most susceptible to infectious disease). A smooth, moisture-resistant floor is easier to clean and sanitize and therefore, helps prevent the spread of communicable disease. Cracked and porous floors cannot be kept clean and sanitary. Dampness promotes the growth of mold. If carpets remain damp for a period of time mold and mildew will develop. Although carpeted floors may be more comfortable to walk and play on, smooth floor surfaces provide a better environment for children with allergies. Also, facilities should exercise caution when using carpeting in child care areas because the fibers, adhesive, and formaldehyde associated with the presence of carpeting can pose health problems. Areas that must have moisture-proof flooring include:

- ◆ Bathrooms
- ◆ Diaper changing areas (underneath and 2 feet around all sides)
- ◆ Laundry areas
- ◆ Kitchens
- ◆ Area around sinks
- ◆ Eating areas
- ◆ Art areas
- ◆ Area around drinking fountains, and
- ◆ Janitorial areas.

Examples of moisture-proof (moisture impervious) flooring include:

- ◆ Wood sealed with varnish, shellac, or paint
- ◆ Linoleum
- ◆ Tiles, and
- ◆ Vinyl.

The edges of carpets that do not extend all the way to the wall present a common tripping hazard. Inspect your carpets regularly for rips, holes, and exposed seams. Secure edges in walking areas to the floor with a metal or plastic carpet strip or cover with a rubber mat.

Using small throw rugs on linoleum or polished wood floors is not a good idea unless they have a non-skid backing.

Make sure any spills on carpeting are cleaned up and dried as quickly as possible.

Not all carpet-deodorizing products are good to use around children. Chemicals that remain in the carpet can get on children's skin or in their eyes or lungs. Some children may have an allergic reaction. You might try sprinkling baking soda on the carpet to absorb odors. Vacuum the carpet afterwards. Regular use of a carpet deodorizer is NOT a substitute for adequate cleaning.

If you have an infant and young toddler room, it is advisable to have a no-shoes policy. Infants and young toddlers spend a lot of time on the floor. Help keep them from ingesting all the bad things that can end up on the floor from the bottom of shoes by not allowing shoes to be worn in these rooms. To keep your child care center cleaner you may want

to institute an indoor and outdoor shoe policy for both parents and children. Parents could provide a pair of easy slip on or hard-soled shoes to keep at the center. Providing covers for shoes for parents that you can wash or requesting that they take off their shoes before they come in will help keep your center cleaner and less work to maintain. You should definitely consider this an option in those areas that the Department of Ecology has identified as having possible elevated lead and arsenic levels in the soil. Staff may choose to have a pair of indoor-only shoes that they keep at the center.

Separating Personal Care Items

Children should not share hats, combs, hairbrushes, or hair ornaments. Doing so can spread infection or parasites such as lice. Children can have their own hairbrushes and store them in their personal cubby or in another area.

If you have an outbreak of lice at your center, immediately clean and disinfect the space near and around the area of parasitic contamination. The dress up area clothing in the role-playing area should also be cleaned and disinfected. You will want to limit the use of hats during the outbreak. Check with your DEL health specialist or public health department for useful suggestions. You might also want to re-examine your procedures for storing bedding, hanging coats and keeping extra clothes. Make sure these are not contributing to the spread of parasites.

Having the children brush their teeth at the center is a valuable activity, but it must be done in a sanitary fashion. Each child needs to have his/her own clearly labeled toothpaste tube or pump. Toothbrushes should:

- ◆ Have clear labels for each child
- ◆ Not touch one another, and
- ◆ Be in holders so they are open to the air.

If you store toothbrushes in a drilled board, stagger the holes so the toothbrushes do not touch or drip onto each other.

Toothbrushes do not last forever. You should replace the children's toothbrushes every few months or if dropped on the floor or other unsanitary areas. You can either buy toothbrushes in bulk and replace them yourself or remind the parents to bring in a new one.

Note: *Toothbrushing should never be done in a diaper-changing sink or a food prep sink. If you use a handwashing sink in the bathroom, you must clean the sink with the 3-step process (wash with soapy water, rinse, and disinfect).*

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How can I make sure water activities are as safe and sanitary as possible?

- To ensure that the children are safe with a swimming pool on the premises, you must:
 - Ensure that pools are inaccessible to children when not in use
 - Provide a certified lifeguard at all times in addition to required staff when children use a swimming pool, and
 - Follow any guidelines established by your local health jurisdiction or the state department of health.
- You must prohibit children from using or having access to a hot tub spa, small portable wading pools, whirlpool, or other similar equipment.
- If you have a water table you must empty and sanitize water tables or similar water play containers after each use and more often if necessary.

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