

Cleaning Toys Helps Prevent Disease



Germs can be easily spread among children as they share toys in an early learning program. Cleaning and sanitizing toys helps prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

Recommended procedures

- When purchasing new toys, choose washable toys whenever possible.
- Collect toys as they become dirty throughout the day.
 - “Mouthed” toys – after use by a child
 - All other toys – daily, or as needed
- Sort toys into separate containers: one for cloth and stuffed toys and one for wood and plastic toys. Sorting the toys ahead of time will make it easier to wash and sanitize them.
- At the end of the day, or at a specified time (i.e., naptime), clean, rinse, and sanitize toys.
- You can use a washing machine, dishwasher, or wash toys by hand.

Washing toys by hand

Step 1: Clean

- Wash and scrub toys thoroughly with soap or detergent and warm water to remove most dirt, grime, and saliva. **It is the most important step in cleaning toys.**
- It is important to **clean** toys before sanitizing them because the sanitizer kills germs better on clean surfaces.

Step 2: Rinse

- **Rinse** toys with water to remove the dirt, soap residue, and germs to help make a clean surface.

Step 3: Sanitize

- **Sanitizing** reduces the germs from surfaces to levels that are considered safe.
- Dip the toys in a solution of chlorine bleach; refer to [DOH Disinfecting and Sanitizing with Bleach Guidelines](#) for the correct proportions. Protect your skin by wearing household rubber gloves.
- Allow toys to dry completely (i.e. overnight) or allow a 2 minute contact time before wiping toys dry with a paper towel.
- Chlorine from the sanitizing bleach solution evaporates off the toys so no residue remains and further rinsing is not necessary.

Washing toys in a dishwasher

- Some HARD toys such as wood, plastic or metal may be washed in a dishwasher. Check instructions on toy.
- Use the proper amount of dishwasher detergent recommended by manufacturer.
- Run toys through the complete wash and dry cycle.
- Do not wash toys with dirty dishes, utensils, etc.

Washing toys in a washing machine

- Many SOFT toys made of fabric, such as stuffed animals, rattles and dress-up clothes may be washed in a washing machine. Check instructions on toy.
- Use HOT water and detergent.
- Dry toys completely in a hot dryer when possible.

NOTE: Do not mix chlorine bleach with other cleansers or chemicals. Mixing chlorine with ammonia will cause dangerous fumes. Only mix chlorine bleach with cool water.