

Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Schedule

Surfaces that are contaminated with germs pose a risk to children and staff. To reduce the spread of infectious diseases it is important to properly clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces. The cleaning schedule below indicates the **minimum** requirements for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting. However, additional cleaning and sanitizing or disinfection should be performed frequently throughout the day and at the end of the day.

What is the difference between cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting?

- **Cleaning** removes germs and dirt from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap or detergent and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. Surfaces and objects should be washed and then rinsed.
- **Sanitizing** lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level. This process is performed after cleaning of surfaces. When used properly, approved sanitizers do not leave a dangerous residual for food contact or mouthable surfaces. Allow items to air dry after being sanitized.
- **Disinfecting** kills germs on surfaces by using chemicals. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or physically remove germs. Disinfecting is performed only after cleaning of surfaces. Disinfectants can leave residual chemical levels that are not safe on food contact or mouthable surfaces.

Sanitizing and disinfectant bleach solutions must be tested to ensure proper concentration as set forth in 15A NCAC 18A .2812 Rules Governing The Sanitation of Child Care Centers.

*Disinfectants are pesticides and should not be used on items children put in their mouths. These items should be sanitized with a food contact sanitizer and can also be sanitized in a dishwasher. **Food/mouth contact surfaces must be washed, rinsed, sanitized and air dried. Air drying reduces possible cross-contamination and reduces residual sanitizer remaining on surfaces.***

Area	After Each Use	Daily (end of the day)	Comments/Guidance	Staff Notes
Child Care Area				
• Cloth toys	Laundered		Should be used by one individual at a time or should not be used at all. These toys should be laundered before being used by another child. Reference procedures by CDC and ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit	
• Toys contaminated with oral or respiratory secretions in rooms with children who are NOT toilet trained	Clean, Sanitize		Remove mouth contact toys and objects that are contaminated with oral or respiratory secretions when a child is finished with them and place into a bin that is inaccessible to other children. Clean, rinse, sanitize and air dry before reuse. Reference procedures by CDC and ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit	
• Toys contaminated with oral or respiratory secretions in rooms with children who are toilet trained	Clean, Disinfect		These toys and objects contaminated with oral or respiratory secretion should be removed from the classroom, cleaned, disinfected, rinsed and air dried before reuse. Reference procedures by CDC and ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit	
• Other toys	Clean at least weekly or when visibly soiled.		When being used by a consistent group/cohort of children, clean weekly or when visibly soiled. Do not share between groups/cohorts. If sharing is unavoidable, clean and disinfect between groups/cohorts when children are not present.	
• Pacifiers	Clean, Sanitize		Pacifiers should be reserved for use by one child. Pacifiers can hold wash water, chemicals or other contaminants if submerged. Air dry after sanitizing.	
• Play activity centers	Clean, Sanitize		(i.e. water tables, sensory play with sand, rice, beans, or playdough) Current Guidance: Activity play center usage is prohibited. Recommend individual water or sensory play activities. Clean and sanitize after each use.	
• High touch surfaces	These surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected frequently throughout the day and at end of the day per guidance provided by CDC & ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit.		High touch surfaces include: doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, etc. based on level of use These surfaces are to be cleaned, disinfected and air dried. Use disinfecting wipes on computer keyboards, do not use spray Reference: CDC and ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit	

Area	After each use	Daily (end of the day)	Comments/Guidance	Staff Notes
• Floors (child care area)		Clean	Sweep then damp mop (consider microfiber damp mop to pick up most particles). Carpeted floors shall be vacuumed daily when children are not present. Wall to wall carpets shall be cleaned using extraction methods at least once each six months.	
• Drinking fountains		Clean, Disinfect	Current Guidance: Discontinue use of drinking directly from water fountains. Post signs requesting water fountains be used for bottle filling stations only. Reference: ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit	
Sleeping Area				
• Cribs, cots, mats			Clean and sanitize weekly or between users	
• Linen (bedsheets and pillowcases)			Per 15A NCAC 18A .2821 launder between users, when soiled and at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily in rooms where children in care are less than 12 months old • Weekly in rooms where children in care are over 12 months old 	
Food Areas				
• Dining tables	Clean, Sanitize		Clean and sanitize as described in 15A NCAC 18A .2812	
• Highchair trays	Clean, Sanitize		Highchair trays must be cleaned and sanitized after use in the childcare kitchen per 15A NCAC18A .2810 & .2812. Use sanitizer as defined in 15A NCAC 18A .2812.	
• Countertops	Clean, Sanitize		Clean and sanitize as described in 15A NCAC 18A .2812	
• Food Contact Surfaces	Clean, Sanitize		Clean and sanitize as described in 15A NCAC 18A .2812	
• Eating utensils/dishes	Clean, Sanitize		Clean and sanitize as described 15A NCAC 18A .2812	
Diapering & Toilet Areas				
• Changing Tables	Clean, Disinfect		Clean and disinfect as described in 15A NCAC 18A .2819	
• Potty chairs	Clean, Disinfect		Emptied, rinsed, cleaned and disinfected as described in 15A NCAC 18A .2817	
• Toilets	Clean, Disinfect (daily or visibly soiled)		Clean and disinfect as described in 15 NCAC 18A .2817.	
• Diaper pails		Clean, Disinfect		
• Sinks/faucets	Clean, Disinfect (daily or visibly soiled)		When change of use occurs, sinks must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each change of use, as per 15A NCAC 18A .2818	
• Countertops (diapering/toileting areas)		Clean, Disinfect	High touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected frequently throughout the day and at end of the day per guidance provided by CDC and ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit .	
• Floors	Clean, Disinfect (daily or visibly soiled)		Clean and disinfect floors in diapering/toilet rooms when children are not present.	

