

# SAFER CLEANING & DISINFECTING IN CHILD CARE FACILITIES: COVID-19 PART 1 GENERAL GUIDANCE

*Toxic ingredients in cleaning and disinfecting products can make indoor air unhealthy to breathe for staff and children.*

For comprehensive guidance on screening, social distancing and other COVID-19 best practices consult the [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov).

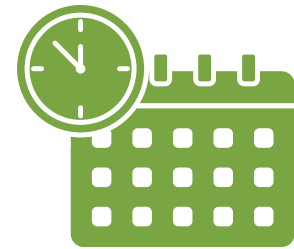
- Many of the best practices outlined below are strategies used in the [Caring for Our Children National Standards](#).
- Remember to check the latest advice from state, local, and federal health agencies.

**NOTE: This guidance is applicable to both family and center-based child care settings.**

## DEVELOP A CLEANING/DISINFECTING SCHEDULE

Child care facilities should develop a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting, and ensure that all staff are informed and following agreed upon procedures. The schedule in [Caring for our Children, Appendix K](#) is a great one to use.

Remember to always clean first--then disinfect.

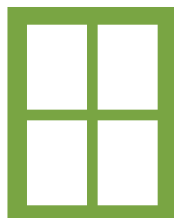


## ROUTINE CLEANING

Routine cleaning with plain soap and water is the most useful method for removing germs from surfaces in child care settings. Microfiber cloths work well for removing dirt as well as germs from surfaces.

## USE PRODUCTS ACCORDING TO THE LABEL

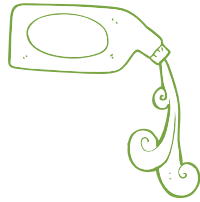
- Use all cleaning and disinfecting products according to the directions on the label and all supplies should be kept secure and out of reach of children.
- Wear protective equipment like gloves, eye protection, shoes with socks, and long sleeves/pants when using disinfectant products.
- Consult the Safety Data Sheet on the product for more information.



## VENTILATE!

Cleaning and disinfecting products should not be used near children. Staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation to prevent the inhalation of harmful fumes. Opening screened windows or doors can increase airflow.

Contact Poison Control right away if you suspect a poisoning.  
Help is available online with [webPOISONCONTROL®](http://www.PoisonControl.org)  
or by phone at 1-800-222-1222.



## DO NOT MIX PRODUCTS

Do not mix or combine cleaning or disinfecting products especially bleach and ammonia as this can create toxic fumes.

## CHOOSE PUMP SPRAYS

Choose pump sprays; avoid the use of [aerosols](#) and foggers. Both disperse tiny particles that can remain suspended in the air long after being used; these chemical containing particles can then be breathed in. The [CDC and EPA discourage using a fogger to saturate the air with cleaners or disinfectants](#). This method has not been proven more effective than other methods of application, and it can lead to harmful exposures.



## CHOOSE CERTIFIED GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS

Choose safer cleaning products certified by [Green Seal](#), [UL, formerly EcoLogo](#) or [EPA's Safer Choice label](#). You can also make your own cleaners with household ingredients such as vinegar and baking soda. See [cleaning recipes](#).

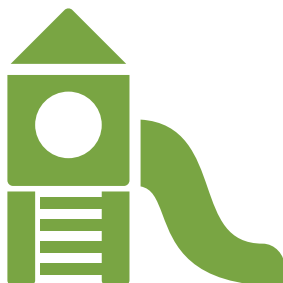


## SOFT & POROUS MATERIALS

Soft and porous materials like carpet, rugs, or blankets should also be thoroughly cleaned and laundered. Vacuum daily with a HEPA filter.

## ITEMS MOUTHED BY CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE DISINFECTED

Non-essential items should be removed to lessen risk of contamination. It is important to NOT disinfect items that are mouthed by children--sanitize with a food contact sanitizer instead. Consult [Caring for Our Children](#) national standards for comprehensive steps on how to clean, sanitize and disinfect toys and bedding.



## OUTDOOR AREAS

Perform normal routine cleaning of outdoor areas, like playgrounds. Do not spray disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds. It has not been shown to reduce risk of COVID-19. High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings, should be cleaned routinely.