

Recommendations for Cleaning and Disinfecting Early Childhood Education Centres

A high level of hygiene should be maintained throughout the centre at all times to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

Cleaning

- This should be done before disinfecting to allow the disinfection to work effectively.
- Soaps, detergents, scourers (e.g. “Jif”, “Ajax”, “Spray’n’Wipe”) and hot water help with cleaning, but do not disinfect.
- Scrubbing is also ineffective.

Disinfecting general areas

- Household bleaches (e.g. “Janola” etc.) are sold in different strengths (usually 2%-5% hypochlorite) that are written on the label.
- Dilute the bleach with water to make a 0.5% hypochlorite solution (see instructions attached).
- Saturate the area to be disinfected with the hypochlorite solution.
- Leave the solution on the area for as long as possible, preferably 30 minutes.
- Wash off the solution thoroughly with copious amounts of water, so that children and staff are not exposed to residual bleach solution (Use a hose if outside).
- If a toilet cleaner is used, use a product that contains at least 0.5% hypochlorite.

Disinfecting Sand and Sandpits

- ESR has advised that there is no effective means of disinfecting sand (Methods that use household bleach or salt are ineffective).
- To protect the health of children, all sand that is contaminated or suspected to be contaminated must be discarded using your usual refuse disposal procedures.
- Sandpits should be protected with a tight-fitting cover and the sandpit must be raked at least daily (and preferably before and after each use) to ensure hazards (such as glass or animal droppings) can be removed.
- The Ministry of Education may provide more detailed advice about design, construction and maintenance of sandpits.

Why we recommend "Bleach" as a Disinfectant

Outbreaks in early childhood education centres are generally caused by micro-organisms (germs) such as giardia and cryptosporidium (protozoa), salmonella (bacteria) and Norwalk-like viruses (a virus). As many of these micro-organisms (especially protozoal cysts and viruses) are resistant to

most disinfectants, we recommend that **only disinfectants containing the chemical hypochlorite are used or stored on the premises.**

Hypochlorite is recognised as having outstanding disinfection properties and is widely available, cheap and commonly used in homes, schools, hospitals, swimming pools and in drinking water supplies.

Hypochlorite is available in “Janola” and toilet cleaners including;

- “Harpic Plus Bleach Liquid Toilet Cleaner” and “Janola Bleach Powder Toilet Gel”

Alternatives

Bleach is unpleasant to work with and centres are often keen to find alternatives. If you wish to use an alternative disinfectant, you must have scientific evidence (from your supplier) of the effectiveness of the disinfectant against a very wide range of micro-organisms including bacteria, viruses and protozoal cysts. (Beware of misleading sales tactics such as the phrase "used in hospitals"- nappies are not changed in all areas of a hospital!).

Hypochlorite strengths

- **0.1%** hypochlorite should be accessible and used after each nappy change and then washed off with a water spray after use (as the sanitiser itself may cause irritation of sensitive skin).
- **0.5%** hypochlorite should be used for general sanitation of bathroom and toilet surfaces. At the end of each day this concentration should then be used on all nappy changing surfaces.

Recommended Minimum Frequency of Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Nappy-changing areas should be cleaned and disinfected **after every nappy change with a 0.1% hypochlorite solution and water** and again **at the end of every day with a 0.5% hypochlorite solution.**
- If a child has a faecal accident, clean the child in the shub, change their clothes and clean and disinfect any soiled surfaces **immediately.**
- Toys, floors, sinks, toilets and other hard surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected **at least daily.**
- Food preparation areas should be kept clean and disinfected to avoid cross-contamination. All staff handling food should have **food safety training.**
- Linen should be laundered **between use by different children** and/or when soiled **at least weekly.** Dry on the washing line if you can as the sunlight kills germs (If this is not possible, use a tumble-drier). Each child’s bedclothes, clothes and belongings should be kept separate.
- Soft toys, dressing up clothes and soft furnishings should be **laundered regularly or whenever soiled.**
- Outdoor play equipment should be **cleaned and disinfected regularly.** Some artificial grass surfaces can be disinfected with hypochlorite bleach (check with your supplier).

Cleaning Schedules

Cleaning schedules are a means of ensuring cleaning and disinfecting is done as often as necessary. They should be developed for the centre even if an outside cleaning agency is used on the premises. The areas that the schedule must specifically include are;

- Kitchen
- Laundry
- Nappy changing area and surfaces
- Toilet areas
- Toys and play equipment

A good cleaning schedule clearly identifies;

- A person in charge (who initials when tasks are completed)
- Utensils / equipment / areas that should be cleaned
- A method of cleaning, including cleaning and disinfecting agents used
- Frequency of cleaning

*****A suggested cleaning schedule template is attached*****

Storage and Safety Tips

- **A fresh batch of each solution should be made up daily to avoid losing its strength**
- **Never** mix chemicals as toxic gases can be produced.
- Be aware- bleach irritates the nose, lungs and skin, and some people are particularly sensitive.
- Wear gloves, particularly if handling undiluted bleach.
- Store disinfectants and diluted disinfectants safely and label them properly.

Outbreaks

- Following cleaning schedules, excluding children who are unwell, encouraging proper hand-washing and drying practices and other infection control procedures can reduce the likelihood of experiencing outbreaks of diseases. However, sometimes outbreaks may occur despite good practices.
- During and following an outbreak of a communicable disease, we may ask you to increase the frequency of cleaning or disinfection or the strength or type of disinfectant used.

For further information contact the Auckland Regional Public Health Service on 09 623 4600

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Making a 0.1% and 0.5% hypochlorite solution

0.1 % hypochlorite

Strength of bleach		Quantity of bleach	Quantity of water	Total volume of diluted solution
% hypochlorite	g/100ml hypochlorite			
0.5% ¹	0.5 g/100ml	50ml	450 ml	500 ml
2%	2 g/100ml	25 ml	475 ml	500 ml
3%	3 g/100ml	10 ml	290 ml	300 ml
4%	4 g/100ml	10 ml	390 ml	400 ml
5%	5 g/100ml	10 ml	490 ml	500 ml

0.5% hypochlorite

Strength of bleach		Quantity of bleach	Quantity of water	Total volume of diluted solution
% hypochlorite	g/100ml hypochlorite			
0.5%	0.5 g/100ml	Use undiluted	Nil	Use undiluted
2%	2 g/100ml	100 ml	300 ml	400 ml
3%	3 g/100ml	50 ml	250 ml	300 ml
4%	4 g/100ml	50 ml	350 ml	400 ml
5%	5 g/100ml	50 ml	450 ml	500 ml

To increase the amount of solution made

- Double (or triple) the amount of bleach **and** water added

Caution

- Hypochlorite solutions lose strength so prepare enough for each day or store unused dilutions in a cool dark place.

