

General Health Reminders



Questions about health requirements before the assessment?

This document briefly summarizes some of the health and sanitation requirements for the revised and third editions of the Environment Rating Scales. See the appropriate Environment Rating Scale referenced at the end of this document for more information. Also view other related resources found at ncrlap.org. When considering these requirements, remember to meet standards across the various agencies including Environmental Health and the Division of Child Development and Early Education.



When is handwashing required?

- **After diapering/toileting**
- **Immediately before meal or snack preparation and eating (remember to avoid recontamination of hands that can occur when unclean surfaces such as floors or toys are touched before eating)**
- **After eating meals or snacks**
- **Before/after shared use of wet materials such as playdough and water play**
- **After messy play (e.g. sand, messy art activities)**
- **After dealing with bodily fluids (e.g. wiping noses, coughing into hands), even if gloves are used**
- **Upon arrival or re-entry into the classroom after outdoor play**
- **After touching contaminated surfaces or objects (e.g. trash cans, mouthed toys, pets)**

Do babies need to wash their hands, too?

Proper handwashing means using running water and soap to effectively rid hands of germs.

- Infants are required to have their hands washed using soap and running water because even the youngest of children touch nearby objects and often put their hands in their mouths.
- Very young infants with little head/neck control can have their hands cleaned with a wipe.



What about children with disabilities?

Children with special needs who have limited head/neck control or weigh too much for caregivers to lift them to the sink can also have their hands cleaned with a wipe.

Are there exceptions?

- Handwashing is not required in *most* cases outside on the playground if a sink is not available. See the NC Additional Notes for specific details. Hand sanitizer or wipes can be used, but hands must be washed with soap and running water when returning to the room after outdoor play.
 - Please note that sanitizer does not replace the need for handwashing in NC.
- If children eat in a cafeteria with no sink available, they should wash their hands in the classroom and use a hand sanitizer or wipes in the cafeteria, if needed, before children eat.

What about surfaces? Cleaning, sanitizing, & disinfecting



What is the difference between a cleaning solution and a bleach water solution?

A cleaning solution such as soapy water is used to clean a surface to remove visible residue or debris. A bleach water solution actually kills germs and disease-causing organisms. For the bleach water solution to be effective the solution must be allowed to dry for a minimum of 2 minutes and complete air drying is ideal.

When is a sanitizing solution needed?

- On toys or objects children have placed in their mouth
- On tables or highchair trays before and after these surfaces are used for meals or snacks

When is a disinfecting solution needed?

- On sink faucets and basins if the same sink is used for handwashing after diapering/toileting and before any other purpose
- On the diapering surface after a change is completed

What's the big deal about same sink?

The practice of disinfecting a sink is intended to prevent the germs that are associated with diapering/toileting from being spread to other classroom materials and surfaces. Any sink that is used for handwashing after diapering/toileting must be disinfected BEFORE the sink is used for ANY other purpose(s) such as:

- Other types of handwashing (e.g., handwashing before eating a snack or meal after wiping a nose, after using play dough or cleaning up from easel painting, when an additional teacher or child arrives, etc.)
- Any classroom materials or toys are cleaned
- Brushing teeth
- Providing drinking water



It is NOT required that sinks be disinfected between different uses or users if:

- A sink is used *only* for hand washing after diapering/toileting
- Separate sinks are generally used, but some routines (diapering and mealtime) occur in immediate succession. In this case, children and staff should use a paper towel to turn off the faucet or leave the water running between children to minimize the need to touch the faucet and/or basin.

Reminders about children's personal hygiene

- Children need well-stocked clean bathrooms including access to toilet paper, paper towels, soap, and running water.
- Staff may need to check bathrooms throughout the time children are in care.
- Facial tissues should be accessible in the classroom or other spaces used for children.

References

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