Bedding, Personal Clothing, and Cribs

Sleep equipment should be used only by one child and cleaned and sanitized before use by another child. Equipment used by one child should be stored separately from that used by others.
• Cribs and crib mattresses should have a nonporous, easy-to-wipe surface.
• Bedding (eg, sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags) should be washable.
• Lice infestation, scabies, and ringworm are among the most common contagious diseases in child care and school settings. Although no evidence exists to show that lice are transmitted except by head-to-head contact, some skin diseases have been shown to spread if bedding materials, jackets with hoods, and hats used by various children are stored so that they touch each other.

Potty Chairs and Toilets

• Potty chair use is not recommended and should be discouraged. Toilets adapted for use by children are preferable.
• If potty chairs are used, they should be:
  ~ Made with a surface that is easily cleaned and sanitized
  ~ Used only in a bathroom area
  ~ Used over a surface that will not be damaged by moisture
  ~ Out of reach of toilets or other potty chairs
  ~ Emptied into a toilet, then cleaned in a sink that is used only for cleaning and sanitizing potty chairs
• Toilets should be kept visibly clean and separate from the children’s activity area.

Staff Training

Provide training for staff who are responsible for cleaning, including the following:
• How to handle, mix, and store cleaning solutions. (See “Sanitation, Disinfection, and Maintenance” on page 20.)
• Proper use of protective barriers (eg, gloves).
• Proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, such as soiled diapers or bandages that are contaminated with blood or body fluids.
• Information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents. Even if custodial services are provided under a contract with an outside service organization, be sure that an assigned staff member supervises routine cleaning of the facility according to the facility’s schedule. Be sure that the staff have read the Material Safety Data Sheet for any products they use.

Hand Hygiene

Because many infected people carry communicable diseases without having symptoms and are contagious before they experience symptoms, caregivers/teachers need to protect themselves and the children they serve by carrying out hygienic procedures on a routine basis.

Why Is Hand Hygiene Important?

Hand hygiene is the most effective means of reducing germs and infections in group care settings. Studies have shown that unwashed or improperly washed hands are primary carriers of infections. Lack of hand washing and poor hand-washing techniques have contributed to many outbreaks of diarrhea among children and staff in group care settings. Conversely, adherence to good hand-washing techniques has consistently demonstrated a reduction in disease transmission in child care and school settings. While working with children, caregivers/teachers should not wear elaborate jewelry or long or artificial nails, because these interfere with effective hand washing. Using hand lotion after hand washing to prevent chapping and cracking of skin also is important.

Although alcohol-based hand rubs have come into common use in hospitals and other health care settings, hand washing is still the preferred method of hand hygiene in educational settings. Alcohol-based hand rubs should only be used when there is no visible soil, and when soap and water washing is not practical. Proper use of alcohol-based hand rubs requires that the product contain at least 60% alcohol and that the amount of product applied to the skin be sufficient to keep the hands wet with the solution for the length of time specified on the manufacturer’s label, generally 15 seconds. This is not less time than it takes to wash hands with soap and water. While the alcohol-based hand rubs are convenient carry-along products, they are expensive, toxic, and flammable. If they are used, precautions to handle these risks are required. Instructions for the use of these products are included in “Hand Hygiene” on page 25.

Diaper Changing

See “Diaper Changing” on page 27 for sanitary procedures.