

Hand Sanitizer Use in Child Care Settings

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others whether inside or outside of the daycare. It is best to wash your hands with soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds. Per the childcare regulations, children and staff must wash their hands with soap and water before eating or handling food and after toileting. At other times, if soap and clean water are not available, the use of a hand-sanitizing product to clean your hands may be used as an alternative. Hand sanitizers, found in drug stores, significantly reduce the number of germs on the skin and are fast acting. However, hand sanitizers will not remove dirt and other debris from hands.

When using alcohol-based hand sanitizers:

- Apply a dime size amount of product to the palm of one hand
- Rub hands together to move the product over all surfaces of hands, including the back of the hands, and fingers
- Rub hands together until the hands are dry
- Keep in mind water should not be used, and paper towels are not needed
- Always follow manufacturers instructions

Storage and use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers:

- Hand sanitizers do not need to be locked but must be maintained inaccessible to children.
- All children must be supervised by a staff member when using hand sanitizers.
- For programs that serve school age children only, hand sanitizer dispensers that are mounted to the wall are acceptable.

Other Resources:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HandWashing/>