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Your Health Connection

INFECTION CONTROL

Water Play and Sand Table Guidelines

Water Play
Water play tables can trap, grow and spread germs from one child to another. They must be drained, emptied, disinfected and air-dried after each use.

Choose a tub that is small in size, light in weight and easy to handle. The type of surface is important for easy cleaning. Choose tubs with smooth, non-absorbent and non-corrosive surfaces. Rounded corners and edges are better for easy cleaning.

Individual water play containers are recommended as they are easily cleaned and disinfected between uses and less likely to contribute to the spread of infections. Individual water play is strongly recommended for a child who is ill with cough, cold-like symptoms or skin infection.

All toys used in water play, should be cleaned, disinfected and allow to air dry daily. Immediately remove from use any toys that have been in contact with a child's mouth.

Instructions for Safe Use:
Fill water play tub with fresh tap water before use. Do not add Bleach or vinegar to the water. If water tables are used for the whole day, then the water should be changed for each group play.

1. Ensure all staff and children wash hands prior to and after using water play tub.
2. Empty tub after use and wash with detergent.
3. Rinse off the detergent with clean, clear water.
4. Disinfect thoroughly by using 200 ppm chlorine or 400 ppm quaternary ammonium. Let the disinfectant sit in the tub for at least 10 minutes or as per manufacturer's recommendation.
5. Empty and allow to air dry.
6. Disinfect all water toys daily.

DO NOT USE WATER TABLES DURING AN OUTBREAK

Sand Play
Play sand used within these tubs must be free of disease causing or injury producing agents such as parasitic eggs, insects, faeces or foreign objects.

Pre-packaged sterilized sand that can be purchased at most hardware stores is a safe benign product that should be used in play sand tubs.

It is important to note that once play sand becomes moist or wet it may be capable of sustaining microbiological growth and as a precaution it is recommend that the wet or moist sand be replaced.

References:
1. Canadian Paediatric Society. (1999). Well Beings: Second Edition. Canadian Paediatric Society. Ottawa, ON.
2. Peel Public Health. (2004). Water play tables. Keep on track: A health & resource guide for child care providers in Peel.

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