



Infection Control in Sensory Play

Sensory Tables

Sensory play equipment can easily become contaminated with germs, and when it's contaminated it can easily spread infections.

Steps for safe use:

1. Ensure that staff wash their hands prior to setting up the sensory table.
2. Staff and children must wash their hands before and after use of sensory table.
3. Single use items which are porous, absorb contamination, and do not allow for effective cleaning or disinfection (i.e., water, feathers, and cotton balls) must be discarded after use. *See below for some examples.*
4. Clean and disinfect or discard sensory items and table after each week when in use. *See below.*
5. Store disinfected sensory items in labeled sealed containers.

Some examples of appropriate sensory materials:

After Each Use

Water with food colouring/soap

Snow

After Each Week

Sand (bake in oven to 82°C/180°F)

Feathers (store purchased)

Cotton balls

Wood chips/shavings

Small pieces of wood

New aquarium gravel

Pasta/rice

Sensory play equipment (sand, water, sensory tables) is to be discontinued during respiratory and enteric outbreaks.

Sensory Items from Outside

Bringing items inside from the natural environment can be a great learning tool for children, but often these items may have insects, mold, and bacteria on them. Caution must be taken when removing an item from outside and bringing it into the childcare setting.

Here are some examples of items and how to make them appropriate for the classroom:

Item	Method
Bark, twigs, pieces of wood, pinecones	Place in a sealed bag and place in the freezer for 24 hours before bringing into the classroom.
Rocks	Wash to remove the dirt.
Leaves/flowers	Inspect for insects before bringing in the classroom.
Bird nests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If purchased from a store it is acceptable. • If brought in from outside, the bird's nest must be placed in an enclosed bag where children can see it but not touch it. • Wash hands after contact with the bird's nest.
Bird feathers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If purchased from a store it is acceptable. • Clean with soap and water, let air dry/dry with a hair dryer. • Look at them through an enclosed bag.