

Using Cleaning Products Safely

In trying to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus many families are using cleaning products and disinfectants more often. However, according to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 39% of adults in the U.S. are putting their health and their family's health at risk by using cleaning products incorrectly.

The CDC found that 19% of people who participated in the study applied bleach to food items, such as fruits and vegetables, and 18% used household cleaning and disinfectant products on their hands or skin. Ten percent of people reported misting their body with a cleaning or disinfectant spray, while 6% said they inhaled vapors from household cleaners or disinfectants. "These practices pose a risk of severe tissue damage and corrosive injury and should be strictly avoided," the researchers of the study warned.

While they are helpful in removing germs from homes, cleaning products and disinfectants need to be used carefully, especially when used in households with children. These products contain ingredients that can irritate children's skin, eyes, nose and throat. They can also be poisonous if they are swallowed, even in small doses.

Risks to Children when Using Household Cleaning Products

Household cleaners with harsh ingredients do not only kill germs and get out tough stains. They can affect your baby's health in a number of ways.

- **Eczema.** A baby's skin is sensitive, and studies have found that irritants and



- allergens in household cleaners and detergents can cause skin irritation.
- **Airway irritation.** Powerful fumes from household cleaners can irritate your baby's airways, making allergy or asthma symptoms worse. Recent studies have shown a link between some cleaning chemicals with higher rates of asthma.
- **Eye irritation.** Household cleaner fumes can also irritate your baby's eyes, causing redness and watering. If splashed directly into the eyes, some cleaners can cause serious damage.
- **Allergies.** Some researchers believe that having a home that's too clean can increase the long-term risk of allergies in a child. It is called the hygiene hypothesis. Without some exposure to germs, a child's immune system might not develop normally. Instead, it becomes hypersensitive and begins to overreact to harmless allergens, like pollen or dander.

- **Poisoning.** Every year, more than a million kids under age 5 swallow poisons like household cleaners, sometimes with devastating effects.
- **Unknown health effects.** Some household cleaners have fragrances that contain chemicals like phthalates. While researchers don't know what their health effects are for sure, some studies have found a possible connection between phthalates and disrupted hormone levels.

How to Clean and Disinfect Carefully

Here are some tips to poison-proof your home and prevent accidents from happening when using cleaning products and disinfectants:

- **Only use them as directed.** Keep cleaners and disinfectants in their original containers with the label. It is important to read and follow the directions for safe and effective use. Some

products, including household bleach, need to be diluted. It's also important not to use them on objects or surfaces they are not intended for.

- **Use one at a time.** Do not create a cocktail of chemicals in an attempt to get something really clean. Mixing bleach with vinegar or ammonia can produce a poisonous gas.
- **Wear protection.** Bleach, ammonia and other hard-surface cleaners can irritate your skin, eyes and throat. Use disposable gloves (or reusable ones that you only wear for cleaning) and make sure the area you are cleaning has good ventilation.
- **Store chemicals up and away.** If children or pets are around, never leave a cleaning product bottle open or unattended. Close them up after use and store on high shelves, or locked in a cabinet. Also properly store or dispose of rags, sponges or paper towels that you use to clean.
- **Treat "safer" cleaners the same.** If you are using a homemade cleaner or one that is marketed as "green," use them with care, as you would any other cleaner. The EPA has a list of cleaners (available here: <https://www.epa.gov/>

[saferchoice](#)) that contain ingredients that are safer for human health and the environment.

- **Stop dirt from getting in the house.**

Make sure that everyone wipes their feet as they come in the house. This simple act will keep out dirt as well as any contaminants from outside. Better yet, have everyone take off their shoes as they come in the house. The floor won't get as dirty and you can clean less often.

- **Do not clean with the kids in the room.** While it may be tempting to multitask, it is much safer to use household cleaners without children in the room. Try to ventilate the area before the children comes back in.

If you or someone in your household has a dangerous exposure to a cleaner or disinfectant, call poison control at 1-800-222-1222.

Less Toxic Homemade Cleaning Products

Alternative or less toxic cleaners are made from ingredients such as baking soda, liquid soap, and vinegar. Many of the ingredients are inexpensive, so you

may save money over time. However they may require more "elbow grease," which means you may have to scrub harder.

Although the ingredients in homemade cleaners (e.g., baking soda for scrubbing, vinegar for cutting grease) are safer, not all are nontoxic. Treat them as you would any other cleaner, with caution.

Hand sanitizers

Resource families probably don't think of hand sanitizer as being particularly dangerous. After all, it's nearly everywhere nowadays. But most hand sanitizers contain at least 60% alcohol – a stronger concentration than is found in most liquor. If children ingest even small amounts of hand sanitizer, they could experience alcohol poisoning.

It's an easy target for children because it's so readily available, and it often comes in small, easy-to-open bottles. For safety purposes, children should only use hand sanitizer under supervision. An adult should squeeze a dime-sized drop into their hands and watch them rub it in until their hands are dry.

Safe Storage of Cleaning Products

The coronavirus has changed cleaning habits in almost every home. It is no surprise that in response to the pandemic, many caregivers are stocking up on cleaning products and cleaning surfaces more often. But with this change, properly storing cleaning products is even more important. It is easy to leave cleaning products designed for regular use out on the counter, and to forget safety measures. Now, more than ever, caregivers should be vigilant to safely store cleaning products.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most poisonings occur when parents or caregivers are home but are not paying attention. That's why it is so important to prevent children and others in your home from getting into cleaning products when they are not supposed to.

SECTION 11-03: Storage Area Requirements

(a) A Resource Family shall store medicines, **disinfectants**, and **cleaning solutions** where they are inaccessible to a child or nonminor dependent.

The RFA Written Directives require that all disinfectants and cleaning solutions be stored in a place out of reach to children in your care. This includes all-purpose cleaners, bleach, dishwashing detergent, drain openers and toilet bowl cleaners, furniture polish, laundry detergent, and more. Caregivers may allow some older children to have access to cleaning products while following the reasonable and prudent standard.

The best way to ensure your children's safety is to keep all cleaning solutions out of your child's reach and sight. Ideally, cleaning solutions should be in a locked cabinet or container. Install a safety latch that locks when you close the door on child accessible cabinets. Always supervise children if they use cleaning products in your home.

Champion for Children Naketa Woodson

Congratulations to Naketa Woodson, our May Champion for Children.

Ms. Woodson is committed to caring and advocating for children in her home. She initially became a resource parent to help one of her clients, but when she completed her training, it was her family that needed her. She cared for her cousin's child and tried to help the mother reunify with her child. While this child was on track to reunify with her mother, the mother's two younger children were removed about 5 months before the oldest child's reunification. Ms. Woodson opened her home to all three children while a placement was sorted out for the two siblings. During this time, Ms. Woodson supported the mother by dropping her off to and from visits, checking in on her to ensure she was working on her case plan and providing a network for the family, all the while still caring for the children's well-being.



their own issues as well," Ms. Woodson said. Ms. Woodson puts in a lot of extra work and research to ensure that children get the services that they need. In the past, she has asked children's schools and doctors to write letters that she can take to parents, or a judge in a severe circumstance, so that children get the care they need.

On the other hand, giving children a second chance to live a normal life has been the most rewarding experience for her. "Coming from where they came from to now and seeing them smile every day gives me happiness," Ms. Woodson said.

"Don't give up, even when you may hear no," Ms. Woodson advised other parents. "Just think about what is best for the child. From there, greater things that will happen and you are going

to change a child's life from bad to good. Push through the beginning because that is always when it is the hardest. It's a difficult transition period for a child who is uprooted from their parents. Show the child love, affection, and communicate with the child, and know that it will get better."

Ms. Woodson has always maintained focus on the safety and well-being of children in her care. She does whatever it takes to make sure a child is safe and advocates for them. For this and many other reasons, the San Francisco Family and Children's Services along with the Parenting for Permanency College thank Ms. Woodson for all that she does. Congratulations to Ms. Woodson, our Champion for Children!

When Ms. Woodson cares for children, she is attentive to their needs and advocates for them. She is honest when there is a concern about a child and voices it with the County as well as with biological parents. In her experience, Ms. Woodson explained that not being able to give a child full access to services they may need has been the hardest part of being a resource parent.

"When a child goes into foster care, telling parents that the child needs more access to care or services is hard because parents can be in denial of their children's problems and of

K.I.D.S.

Published bimonthly for San Francisco County foster parents, resource families, NREFMs and kin care providers. To suggest a topic, submit an article, promote an event, or provide feedback, email Sharon.Walchak@sfgov.org.

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Newsletter Website: <https://sfcaresforkids.org/kids-newsletter/>

Helpful Phone Numbers

HSA Operator	(415) 557-5000
CPS Child Abuse Hotline	(800) 856-5553 or (415) 558-2650
Foster Care Ombudsman	(415) 558-2828
Transportation Duty Line	(415) 557-5376
Licensing/RFA/Recruitment Hotline	(415) 558-2200
Free Foster Parenting Respite Service	(415) 861-4060 x 3035
Community Services	211
Non-emergency Government Services	311

FCS Agency Directory: www.sfhsa.org/174.htm



Parenting for Permanency College News

AFS PPC Training Program

We offer RFA Pre-Service, Advanced Training and Placement (SA/HIV and ABC's of Baby Care) Training. To obtain information and register please contact: PPC@afs4kids.org

RFA Pre-Service Approval Training	
English RFA Pre-Service Training	November 10-19, 2020 (Tues/Thurs) 5:15-9 p.m.
Spanish RFA Pre-Service Training	November 7 & 14, 2020 (Saturdays) 8:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Ongoing Training	
Advanced Training	December 5, 2020 9:45 a.m.-5 p.m.
All training is held on Zoom. To register for training please contact: Alternative Family Services (AFS) PPC@afs4kids.org or through your RFA Worker	

Education Corner

If you need any help related to education, you can always reach out to your social worker or to San Francisco's foster youth education liaisons:

1. Gloria Anthony-Oliver, FCS Education Liaison, gloria.anthony-oliver@sfgov.org, 415-636-2224
2. Shira Andron, FYS Coordinator, androns@sfusd.edu, 628-900-3427
3. Nelson Cabrera, FYS Education Liaison (Child Welfare and Attendance), cabreran@sfusd.edu, 415-242-2621 x3255
4. Susana Diaz, FYS Education Liaison (Head Counselor), diazs1@sfusd.edu, 415-242-2615 x3310
5. Alicia Rodriguez, FYS Education Liaison (School Social Worker), rodriguez@sfusd.edu, 415-242-2615 x3061

For Educational, resources go to the San Francisco Unified School District at <https://www.sfusd.edu/> and search the following topics:

- Family Technology Video Tutorials
- Live 1:1 Tech Support
- Technology Resources for Families
- Tutorial Videos for SFUSD Student Take-Home Devices Technology FAQs
- Guidance for Service Providers: Communication with Students During School Closures
- Weekly Family Digest
- Other educational resources including tutoring

Other RFA Ongoing Training Resources

Approved Resource Families are required to complete 8 hours of training yearly.

Foster Parent College

<http://www.fosterparentcollege.com/>

QPI California

Just In Time Training: <http://www.qpicalifornia.org/>

Mandated Reporter Training

<https://mandatedreporter.ca.com/>

Resource Family Meetings

For more information about Resource Family, meetings please reach out to your RFA Worker or contact Arlene Hylton at Arlene.hylton@sfgov.org or 451-557-5067.

Resource Family Convening -Bi-monthly

3rd Wednesday of EVERY OTHER month, alternating 5 PM to 7 PM and 7 PM-9 PM
November 18, 2020, 7-9 PM

SA/HIV Support Groups

2nd Tuesday (English) and 2nd Thursday (Spanish) of each month, 7:30 to 9:30 pm unless otherwise announced. To at-

tend SA/HIV Support Group, please contact Sharon Walchak at (510) 282-4658.

English: November 17, 2020 & December 15, 2020

Spanish: November 19, 2020 & December 17, 2020

Other Resources

California Corona Virus (COVID -19) Information

<https://covid19.ca.gov/>

COFFEE WITH CAREGIVERS VIRTUAL CONNECTION, SUPPORT & TRAINING

Grab your favorite drink and snack and join us during the following virtual meetings:

Friday, November 6th 1:30-2:30 PM

Friday, November 13th 1:30-2:30 PM

Friday, November 20th 1:30-2:30 PM

Friday, December 4th 1:30-2:30 PM

Friday, December 11th 1:30 - 2:30 PM

Friday, December 18th 1:30 - 2:30 PM

Coffee with Caregivers Supports Relative, Non-Relative, Adoptive and Guardianship Caregivers

Register @ www.cacaregivers.org/coffee

Zoom Meeting ID 249-718-4894

Email Nichole: narnold@cacaregivers.org