Aim: The sharing of toys between children can present a potential risk of infection, as toys may become contaminated through contact with hands, dust, or body fluids. Toys have been implicated in outbreaks of infection; however, access to toys plays an important role in supporting children's development and wellbeing.
To balance developmental needs with patient safety, all toys must be reviewed prior to purchase or use to ensure they can withstand cleaning with a chlorine-based detergent.
Where toys are in use, good practice must always be followed to minimise the risk of infection.

Cleaning

General cleaning after use

After use, toys and games should be cleaned using detergent wipes, thoroughly dried, and stored in a designated cupboard or box. Toys or games that cannot be adequately cleaned must be discarded via the domestic waste stream.

Toys/games contaminated with bloods or body fluids

Any toys or games contaminated with blood or other body fluids must be decontaminated using a chlorine-based detergent in line with NHSGGC decontamination guidance. Toys or games that are grossly contaminated should be discarded via the clinical waste stream.

Donated Toys

All donated toys must be new, unused, meet relevant British Safety Standards, and be capable of withstanding cleaning. Toys or games should not be purchased or accepted as donations unless there is an approved cleaning process in place. Shared toys and games should have hard, smooth surfaces that can tolerate cleaning. Toys or games with fabric components must be suitable for laundering and have an agreed laundering process.

Toys Used for Patients in Isolation

Toys and games used for patients in isolation must be cleaned using a chlorine-based detergent in line with NHSGGC decontamination guidance. Where effective cleaning cannot be assured, toys should not be used.

Patients own Toys/Games

Patients' own toys and games should be stored in the patient's locker when not in use and must not be shared with other patients. Parents or carers are responsible for ensuring these items are kept clean and removed if damaged or contaminated.

Wall mounted toys/games

Wall-mounted toys and games should be cleaned using detergent wipes and dried thoroughly after each patient use.

Therapeutic Play

Water play

Water play must be provided on a one-to-one basis only. Water should be discarded immediately at the end of each session. Containers must be cleaned, dried thoroughly, and stored appropriately before re-use. Water should not be discarded in the clinical handwash sink.

Therapeutic Sand

Sand play must be provided on a one-to-one basis only. Each patient must be allocated their own individual container of sand. Sand must be visually inspected before each use to ensure it is free from debris or contamination and must be stored in a dry condition when not in use. If sand becomes wet or damp during play, it must be discarded immediately and not reused.

Other Considerations

Books/playing cards/board games

Books should be checked regularly for signs of contamination and disposed of if visibly soiled. Between patients, book covers should be wiped using detergent wipes.

Construction Toys (e.g. Lego)

Construction toys should not be used for patients in isolation unless they are the patient's own toys.

Hand-Held Electronic Toys

Hand-held electronic toys should have a wipeable or washable keyboard or cover to allow effective cleaning between use.

Play Dough

Patients should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after play. Play dough must be for single patient use only and stored in a lidded, airtight container. It may be reused by the same patient only and must not be shared.

Soft Toys / Cloth Dolls

Soft toys and cloth dolls may be provided as a patient's own toy and should be taken home at the end of the patient's stay. These toys should be inspected regularly for signs of contamination. If soiled, patients or carers should be encouraged to take the toy home for washing or to dispose of it appropriately. Unless contaminated with blood/body fluids all waste should be discarded via domestic waste stream.

Therapeutic Toys (e.g. dementia dolls, twiddle muffs)

All therapeutic toys, including soft-bodied items, should be made from wipeable materials. Any therapeutic toys that are not wipeable must be allocated for single-patient use only. If soiled, patients or carers should be encouraged to take the toy home for washing or to dispose of it appropriately.