

Prevention & Control

Bed Bugs in Schools and Daycare Centers

Because people are constantly entering and exiting, schools and daycare centers are likely places for bed bugs to be transported to and from. Protocols should be established to deal with bed bugs when they appear. Unlike apartment buildings, homes and hotels, schools are not as likely to develop breeding populations of bed bugs because the bugs feed exclusively on blood taken from persons asleep or at rest. In contrast, daycare centers may be more likely to develop serious bed bug problems in rooms where children nap. Having guidelines for preventing and handling bed bugs if and when they appear is critical to reducing bed bug problems.

GUIDELINES

- Collect any specimens thought to be bed bugs. Place them in a small container of isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol. Have specimens identified by a qualified individual such as an entomologist or pest management professional. Remember that finding a confirmed bed bug on a child or child's belongings does not necessarily mean the child's household, or the school or daycare, is infested.
- Discreetly remove the child from the classroom and inspect his/her clothing and belongings along with any bins or lockers used to store the child's belongings. To kill all stages of bed bugs, clothing and other items can be dried in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes.
- After inspection, keep potentially infested belongings in a tightly sealed container such as a garbage bag or plastic bin with lid. Leave them there except when they are needed or when the child leaves for home.
- Send bed bug information home with the child to inform parents or guardians that the home may be infested. Include material about bed bugs and how they are controlled, including the need for professionals to confirm and control bed bug infestations. Also consider sending information home with children who may have come in contact with the child or the child's belongings.
- Where it is confirmed or reasonable to believe that bed bugs may be infesting a school or daycare, call a pest management professional or a staff member having knowledge of and experience with bed bugs, to inspect all rooms visited by the child and the child's belongings. Rooms where bed bugs occur should be treated to eliminate the bugs. NOTE: It is unlawful to apply most pesticides in public schools and daycare centers with children present. Staff should not be permitted to bring and use pesticides in the facility. Applicators must be familiar with Integrated Pest Management (IPM) regulations (see 225 ILCS 235 and <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/ipm/index.htm>).
- Infested households should employ a pest management professional and take precautions to prevent transporting bed bugs to schools, daycares or other facilities. At home, clothing to be worn outside the home should be washed and dried in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes, then placed in a tightly sealed container such as garbage bag or plastic bin until just before the child exits the home. This also applies to personal items such as coats and backpacks.