

COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan Guidance in Early Care and Education Sites

Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow):

1/4/2022:

- Updated quarantine, testing, and masking guidance for persons exposed to COVID-19 in ECE facilities to align with new California Department of Public Health isolation and quarantine guidance for the general public.
- Added a testing requirement for close contacts who are exempt from quarantine in order to remain in the ECE facility after an exposure.

A targeted public health response to contain COVID-19 exposures at a community-level can help maximize the impact of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) COVID-19 response.

Early Care and Education (ECE) Providers are trusted community partners that can help DPH improve the timeliness and impact of the Public Health response through rapid initiation of a COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan (EMP). Immediate implementation of an EMP after identifying a single case of COVID-19 at the ECE center can accelerate the ability to contain spread of COVID-19 and prevent that single case from becoming an outbreak at the site.

The steps for managing exposures to 1, 2, and 3 or more COVID-19 cases at ECE sites are described below and summarized in Appendix A. Because ECE Providers will vary in the level of resources available for COVID-19 exposure management, *required* steps are the minimum elements that must be included in the EMP. *Recommended* steps include optional elements for exposure management where center resources are sufficient.

Note that references to “centers”, “settings” or “sites” apply to all childcare providers, including family childcare home providers. The word “case” is used to refer to the person associated with the ECE site who has COVID-19 infection. Where this document calls for actions on the part of the site towards the case (such as providing instructions) the case should be understood to be the affected staff person or the parent (or caregiver/guardian) of the affected child. Additional resources for ECE Centers can be located in the [Early Care and Education COVID-19 Toolkit](#).

Exposure Management Planning Prior to Identifying 1 COVID-19 Case at the ECE Site

- ✓ **Required:** A designated ECE Center COVID-19 Liaison who serves as the point of contact for COVID-19 safety protocols. The designee will ensure that staff, families, and children receive education about COVID-19 and serve as a liaison to DPH for sharing site-level information to facilitate public health action.
- ✓ **Required:** A plan for all children, employees, visitors, and household members of family child-care homes who (1) have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, (2) are quarantined because of exposures at the center, or (3) are at a center with an active public health investigation to have access to testing or be tested for COVID-19.
- ✓ **Required:** A plan to report all known COVID-19 hospitalizations and/or deaths among **children** or staff to DPH by sending a notification to ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
- ✓ **Recommended:** ECE settings that choose to implement a symptom screening program are advised to apply DPH guidance on [Decision Pathways for Symptoms and Exposures](#) for persons who have

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not been tested yet for COVID-19 but screen positive for symptoms prior to entry or while at the ECE site.

Exposure Management for 1 COVID-19 Case at the ECE Site

- ✓ **Required:** After identifying 1 confirmed COVID-19 case, ECE Provider instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). NOTE: a confirmed COVID-19 case is an individual who has a positive COVID-19 test. Per isolation instructions, cases should wear a mask indoors and outdoors for 10 days. NOTE: there are some people who should not wear a mask, such as children younger than 24 months, people with certain medical conditions or disabilities, and people instructed by their medical provider not to wear a mask. Children ages 2 to 8 should wear a mask only when under adult supervision. See [Who should not wear a mask](#) and [Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities](#).
- ✓ **Required:** ECE Provider informs the case that DPH will contact the case directly through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Case Isolation.
- ✓ **Required:** ECE Center COVID-19 Liaison must notify DPH of (1) persons with confirmed COVID-19 who were on site at any point within the 14 days prior to the illness onset date and (2) persons on site who were exposed to the infected person during the infectious period. The illness onset date is the first date of COVID-19 symptoms or the COVID-19 test date, whichever is earlier.
 - A case is considered to be infectious from 2 days before their symptoms first appeared until the time, they are no longer required to be isolated (i.e., no fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of medicine that reduce fevers AND other symptoms have improved AND at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared). A person with a positive COVID-19 test but no symptoms is considered infectious from 2 days before their test was taken until 10 days after their test. A person is considered to have been exposed to a case during the infectious period if at least one of the following criteria are met:
 - Being within 6 feet of the infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
 - Having had unprotected contact with the infected person's body fluids and/or secretions of a person with confirmed COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing utensils or saliva, or providing care without using appropriate protective equipment).
 - NOTE: Exposures will be reviewed by Public Health to confirm which persons need to quarantine.
 - Secure online reporting is the preferred method for notifying DPH of COVID-19 exposures and can be done on a computer or mobile device with access to the secure web application: <http://www.redcap.link/lacdph.educationsector.covidreport>. If online reporting is not possible, reporting can be done manually by downloading and completing the [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Education Sector](#) and sending it to ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov. All case notifications should be submitted within 1 business day of being notified of the case.
- ✓ **Required:** Persons that are identified to have had an exposure to the case at the site are notified by the ECE Provider through a letter or other communication strategies. An Exposure Notification letter template is available at: [COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Early Care and Education Sites \(Template1\)](#). The notification of exposure should include the following messages:
 - DPH will **coordinate with the ECE facility to** contact persons with an exposure at the site who meet the quarantine requirement through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to

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collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Quarantine.

- **Requirements for close contacts who are not exempt from quarantine**

- The following close contacts are required to quarantine:
 - Persons who are not [fully vaccinated](#)*, OR
 - Persons who are fully vaccinated and [booster-eligible](#) but have NOT yet received their booster dose.

*Includes persons previously infected with SARS-CoV-2, including within the last 90 days.

- Close contacts who are required to quarantine must self-quarantine (stay in their home or another residence, separate from others) and monitor for symptoms as outlined in [Quarantine and Other Instructions for Close Contacts](#). As long as symptoms of COVID-19 are not present they may end quarantine either:
 - After 10 full days have passed from their last known contact to the infectious case (as defined above). Activities may resume starting on Day 11 provided they are asymptomatic.
 - After 5 full days have passed from their last known contact to the infectious case if they have a negative viral test result from a specimen collected on Day 5 from the date of last exposure to the case. Activities may resume starting on Day 6. The test must be an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test (e.g., NAAT or Antigen test); a negative test result from an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test is acceptable for testing out of quarantine. If the test is positive, follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). Exposed persons who were previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the past 90 days should test using an Antigen test.
 - Regardless of when quarantine ends, close contacts must continue to monitor their health and upgrade their masks for 10 days from the date of last exposure: adults should wear a surgical grade (also referred to as medical procedure) mask or higher level personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a KN95 or N95 respirator mask; children aged 24 months and older should wear a non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire. Masks must be worn at all times when around others both indoors and outdoors, except with eating or drinking. For children, masks may be removed during nap time. NOTE: there are some people who should not wear a mask. See [Who should not wear a mask](#) and [Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities](#). Refer to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health [COVID-19 Masks](#) page for latest guidance on masking. If symptoms develop, test using an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test and stay home. If the test is positive, follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). Note: exposed persons who were previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the past 90 days should test with an Antigen test.

- **Requirements for close contacts who are exempt from quarantine**

- The following close contacts are not required to quarantine provided they remain asymptomatic:
 - Persons who are boosted; OR
 - Persons who are [fully vaccinated](#) but not yet booster-eligible
- In order to remain in the ECE facility, close contacts who are exempt from quarantine

are required to test. At a minimum, the test specimen must be collected on Day 5 after the date of last exposure. However twice a week testing is strongly recommended, with the first test specimen collected immediately after being notified of the exposure and the second test specimen collected on Day 5 after the date of last exposure. The test must be an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test (e.g., NAAT or Antigen test); use of an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test is acceptable for this testing requirement.

- In addition, they must monitor for symptoms and upgrade their masks for 10 days from the date of last exposure: adults should wear a surgical grade (also referred to as medical procedure) mask or higher-level PPE such as a KN95 or N95 respirator mask; children aged 24 months and older should wear a non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire. Masks must be worn at all times when around others both indoors and outdoors, except with eating or drinking. For children, masks may be removed during nap time. NOTE: there are some people who should not wear a mask. See [Who should not wear a mask](#) and [Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities](#). Refer to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health [COVID-19 Masks](#) page for latest guidance on masking. If symptoms develop, test using an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test and stay home. If the test is positive, follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).
- Employees with a campus exposure should follow guidance outlined in Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention [Emergency Temporary Standards](#) (ETS). However if an employee's quarantine period ends before they meet [Cal/OSHA's criteria for return-to-work](#), they may return to the Worksite(s) as soon as they have cleared quarantine per the [Health Officer Quarantine Order](#). A summary of requirements is provided in the Public Health guidance document on [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#).

- ✓ ECE facilities are required to have a plan to facilitate COVID-19 response testing for persons who have an exposure at the ECE facility. Staff and children who are tested must inform the ECE facility of the test results. Testing resources include Employee Health Services or Occupational Health Services, Personal Healthcare Providers, LA City and County Testing Sites: covid19.lacounty.gov/testing, and [Community-Based Testing Sites](#) (local health centers and pharmacies). Individuals who need assistance finding a medical provider can call the LA County Information line 2-1-1, which is available 24/7. *Recommended:* ECE Provider will determine whether additional notification is needed to inform the wider ECE center community about the site exposure and precautions being taken to prevent spread of COVID-19. A general notification letter template is available at: [COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Early Care and Education Sites \(Template2\)](#).

Exposure Management for 2 COVID-19 Cases at ECE Site within a 14-day Period

- ✓ *Required:* After identifying 2 confirmed cases within a 14-day period, ECE Provider follows the required steps for 1 confirmed case.
- ✓ *Required:* ECE Provider consults with Public Health to determine whether the 2 confirmed cases are epidemiologically linked, meaning that the two affected individuals were both present at some point in the same setting during the same time period while infectious.* ECE Providers should contact DPH for assistance in determining whether cases are epidemiologically linked by emailing ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.

**A case is considered to be infectious from 2 days before symptoms first appeared until they are no longer required to be isolated (i.e., no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fever AND symptoms have improved AND at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared). A person with a positive COVID-19 test but no symptoms is considered infectious*

from 2 days before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.

- Determination of epidemiological links between cases may require further investigation to assess exposure history and identify all possible locations and persons that may have been exposed to the case while infectious at the site. NOTE: Epidemiologically linked cases include persons with identifiable connections to each other such as sharing a physical space (e.g., in a classroom, office, or gathering), indicating a higher likelihood of linked spread of disease in that setting rather than sporadic transmission from the broader community. If epidemiological links exist, DPH will advise the ECE Provider on important steps to take and communications to children, parents/caregivers/guardians, and employees on precautions to take to prevent further spread at the setting, including implementation of site-specific interventions for infection control.

Exposure Management for ≥ 3 COVID-19 Cases at the ECE Site within a 14-day period

☑ **Required:** If the ECE Provider identifies a cluster of 3 or more confirmed cases within a 14-day period, the ECE Provider should proceed with the following steps:

- Report the cluster immediately to DPH. Secure online reporting is the preferred method for notifying DPH and can be done on a computer or mobile device with access to the secure web application: <http://www.redcap.link/lacdph.educationsector.covidreport>. If online reporting is not possible, reporting can be done manually by downloading and completing the [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Education Sector](#) and sending it to ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
- DPH will review the submitted information to determine whether the outbreak criteria described below have been met and will contact the ECE Provider within 1 business day to advise on next steps.
- Outbreak Criteria: At least 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a 14-day period in a specified group* at the ECE site with members who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a household, and are not a close contact of each other outside the campus.

**Specified groups include persons that share common membership (e.g., same classroom, ECE event, or ECE extracurricular activity).*

- If outbreak criteria are not met, DPH will advise the ECE Provider to continue with routine exposure management.
- If outbreak criteria are met, a DPH Outbreak Investigation is activated and a public health investigator will communicate directly with the ECE Provider to coordinate the outbreak response.