

Frequently Asked Questions

COVID and Early Childhood Education

ELRC Region 17 - 2/16/2022



MASKING:

CDC recommends universal indoor masking in Early Childhood Education programs for individuals ages 2 years and older, regardless of vaccination status. This applies to children and adults.

<p>Q. How do we handle children who are eating or taking a nap and don't wear a mask during that time?</p> <p>A. Children can remove their masks during meals, snacks, and naptime. While masks are removed, providers should keep children returning from isolation 6 feet apart whenever possible, and implement other mitigation strategies to minimize potential spread.</p> <p>Excerpted from revised CDC Guidance (Jan 28, 2022): "Separate children's naptime mats or cribs and place them so that children are head to toe for sleeping with as much distance as possible between mats, ideally at least 6 feet apart. Layer additional strategies, such as improved ventilation, if possible"</p>	<p>Q. Are cloth masks okay?</p> <p>A. Montgomery County Office of Public Health recommends a well-fitting mask worn consistently and correctly. While different types of masks provide different levels of protection, it is most important that a mask fits correctly and is worn appropriately.</p>
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REPORTING POSITIVE CASES

When children or staff test positive in an ECE setting, each positive case must be reported to the Bureau of Certification, the Montgomery County Office of Public Health, and the ELRC. Reporting should occur within 24-hours of being notified.

We are working to streamline reporting requirements.

<p>Q. How do I contact the Bureau of Certification?</p> <p>A1. Email your OCDEL Certification Representative A2. Use the PA COVID-19 Data Collection Tool -Information on how to access the COVID-19 Data Collection Tool is available https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Update-to-Launch-of-the-Licensed-Facility-COVID-Data-Collection-Tool.html?soid=1112117859299&aid=kMNo5lotDcE -For questions on how to use the tool, please contact your certification representative</p>	<p>Q. How do I contact the Montgomery County Office of Public Health?</p> <p>A. Email: MCOPHChilcare@montcopa.org Phone: (610) 278-6211 (call will go to voicemail) Please include if this is a classroom or program closure Please include a list of all positive children and staff</p>
<p>Q. How do I contact ELRC 17?</p> <p>A. Email: ELRCRegion17@pa.gov Please include if this is a classroom or program closure A list of absent Child Care Works children must be included</p>	<p>Q. If a child tests positive and we are informed, but hasn't been in care for the last three days, do we have to report it?</p> <p>A. Yes, each case must be reported.</p>

ISOLATION / QUARANTINE / EXCLUSION FROM ECE SETTING

Isolation refers to an individual who has tested positive for COVID. Quarantine refers to an individual who has been exposed to a COVID-positive individual.

Individuals who are up to date on COVID vaccines do not need to quarantine after an exposure as long as they remain asymptomatic. For individuals under the age of 12, this means two weeks after the final dose of their primary series. Individuals age 12 and older must have a booster shot at least 5 months after the last dose in their primary series to be considered up to date for MRNA vaccines, or at least 2 months of the first dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

New CDC guidance states that isolation and quarantine periods can be reduced to five days for people who can consistently wear well-fitting masks, as long as they remain symptom free, or fever has ended and symptoms have improved.

<p>Q. When can children who don't wear a mask correctly with consistency return to care? A. Children who cannot mask consistently should complete a 10 day isolation after testing positive or a 10 day quarantine after an exposure. Day 0 is the day symptoms started or date of test for isolation and day 0 is day of exposure for quarantine.</p>	<p>Q. When do we close a classroom? A. There is no threshold for closing a classroom. When an individual tests positive, centers should conduct contact tracing to the best of their ability. If centers cannot determine who truly does and does not meet the definition of close contact (within 6 feet of a positive individual for 15 consecutive minutes or more), than the entire classroom should quarantine. Individuals who are up to date on vaccines or who have had a positive COVID test in the past 90 days do not need to quarantine.</p>
<p>Q. If they are within their 90 day window, if they are not able to wear a mask and exposed, are they required to quarantine or excused? A. Children who have had a positive test for COVID-19 within the past 90 days do not need to quarantine. Masking is recommended for ten days after exposure, but this is a recommendation only.</p>	<p>Q. If you are a close contact how long is the recommended quarantine? A. Close contacts (unvaccinated) must quarantine for 5 days and can return on Day 6 if they can mask consistently and correctly on Days 6-10. If the individual cannot or will not mask, they must complete a 10 day quarantine. Last date of exposure is considered Day 0.</p>
<p>Q. Should our special needs children be in the same category as our 2 and under because some refuse to wear mask? A. Children who cannot wear a mask correctly and consistently, regardless of age, should complete a 10 day isolation/quarantine.</p>	<p>Q. If a parent elects to do the full 10 day quarantine and not test to come back, do they have to get tested day 5? A. CDC recommends testing on Day 5 after an exposure. This is a best practice, not a requirement.</p>
<p>Q. What is the difference between close contacts and family contacts? A. Quarantine time for close contacts is determined by last date of exposure. Individuals with a positive household member are continually exposed until their household member is no longer infectious if the positive household member is not fully isolating. Therefore, household close contacts must quarantine while their household member is infectious and then for an additional 5-10 days, depending on their ability to mask.</p>	<p>Q. If a child is out because of a positive then comes back and there is an exposure in the room do they need to quarantine again? A. If a child is unvaccinated and has not had a positive COVID test within the past 90 days, they must quarantine after every exposure.</p>
<p>Q. If a child's sibling has a positive case and is home quarantining for 10 days (sick the entire time) does the sibling need to stay home for the entire quarantine plus five days? A. Students with a positive household family member must quarantine while that person is infectious and then for an additional 5-10 days, depending on their ability to mask.</p>	<p>Isolation/Quarantine/Exclusion from ECE Setting: With or without a COVID test, sick individuals should stay home. Individuals who show COVID symptoms or test positive must be excluded from the facility. Certification regulates what is required to allow an individual to return. The CDC has recommendations that you should follow to determine how long someone should isolate or quarantine.</p>

RETURN TO CARE

Per Certification Announcement C-21-11:

The PA DOH maintains a list of reportable diseases and COVID-19 was added to the list. PA DOH requires that COVID-19 be reported within 24 hours.

Any child or facility person reporting positive test results or showing symptoms of COVID-19 cannot be in attendance at the child care facility. Upon return, the individual must provide a written note or a negative test result signed and verified by a physician or nurse practitioner (CRNP) clearing them to return to the child care facility. A home test or any other negative test results that have not been reviewed, signed and verified by a physician or CRNP will not be acceptable for a child or a facility person to return to the child care facility.

<p>Q. Can a rapid at home test be used for a test to come back if they isolate for 5 days and can they then return on Day 6 if they properly wear masks with a negative test? A. No. A rapid home test cannot be used. The individual must provide a written note or a negative test result signed and verified by a physician or nurse practitioner (CRNP) clearing them to return to the child care facility.</p>	<p>Q. What if the doctor's note just says the child completed quarantine, but nothing about returning to school? Is that acceptable? A. No, the documentation should clear them to return to the child care facility.</p>
<p>Q. Is the Health Dept still contact tracing? A. The Office of Public Health is still conducting contact tracing for high priority individuals; and are assisting community partners to conduct contact tracing when exposures occur.</p>	<p>Q. Does a Doctor's note need to be provided if a staff or child does a full 10 day quarantine? A. Yes. Upon return, the individual must provide a written note or a negative test result signed and verified by a physician or nurse practitioner (CRNP) clearing them to return to the child care facility. A PCR test, a rapid test, or a letter from Montgomery County Office of Public Health showing test results from a lab that notes the physician's name is sufficient. It does not have to have a handwritten signature. A home test or any other negative test results that have not been reviewed, signed and verified by a physician or CRNP will not be acceptable for a child or a facility person to return to the child care facility.</p>
<p>Q. Can you please confirm that DHS does NOT regulate children exposed with no symptoms are able to attend child care? A. Any child or facility person reporting positive test results or showing symptoms of COVID-19 cannot be in attendance at the child care facility. They will need to isolate for a minimum of five days and must have a negative test or note from a doctor or CRNP in order to return.</p>	<p>Q. What sanctions beyond a citation will occur from DHS Certification for noncompliance? A. Non-reporting of a communicable disease or failure to receive a negative test and/or notes from families/staff who had confirmed cases could result in multiple citations which could lead to a Negative sanction which can include provisional certificate of compliance, refusal to renew or revocation of certificate of compliance due to repeated noncompliance.</p>