



Montgomery County Office of Public Health (MCOPH)

Test to Stay (TTS) Guidance for Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs (ECE)

TTS guidance applies to the following individuals ONLY: Children and staff who are 2 years of age and older, who are not up to date with vaccination or are unvaccinated, and who were exposed to COVID-19 in ECE setting or in the community. This does not include household exposures.

TTS is an option offered by MCOPH which implements a multi-layered approach including testing and masking. This strategy prevents disruption to care and allows unvaccinated asymptomatic close contacts to avoid a traditional quarantine while attending an ECE setting. ECE providers can also consider applying TTS as a prevention strategy for vaccinated children and staff during an outbreak response where increased cases are being observed. While COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing serious illness and infection, some vaccinated individuals may still get COVID-19.

MCOPH recommends Test to Stay (TTS) as one of several tools in a layered prevention strategy to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19. TTS allows staff and children who are 2 years of age and older, who are not up to date with vaccination or are unvaccinated, and who were exposed to COVID-19 in ECE setting or in the community and are asymptomatic to continue to attend ECE by agreeing to COVID-19 testing and masking requirements. Individuals who are participating in TTS for ECE are required to wear a mask at all times when around other people for ten days after the date of last exposure and must agree to 2 COVID-19 antigen tests: First COVID-19 antigen test on days 2-3 of quarantine, and the second COVID-19 antigen test between days 4-6 of quarantine. If an individual cannot wear a well-fitted mask at all times during the 10 day quarantine period, the exposed individual cannot participate in TTS and must complete standard quarantine.

TTS in ECE applies to **COVID-19 exposures that occur in the ECE setting or in the community but does not include household exposures.** Individuals who have had an exposure but are up to date with vaccination or have had a positive COVID-19 test within the last 90 days do not need to quarantine after exposure but may be asked to participate in other prevention strategies as part of an outbreak response. These individuals should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days after their exposure and should get tested on Day 5 after their exposure.

Promotion of COVID-19 Vaccinations

Staying up to date on routine vaccinations is essential to prevent illness from many different infections. Vaccines reduce the risk of infection by working with the body's natural defenses to help safely develop immunity to disease. For COVID-19, staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease.

	ECEs can promote vaccinations among teachers, staff, families, and eligible children by providing information about COVID-19 vaccination, encouraging vaccine trust and confidence, and establishing supportive policies and practices that make getting vaccinated as easy and convenient as possible.
Contact Tracing and Case Investigation	Universal case investigation and contact tracing is not for individual cases of COVID-19. Case investigation and contact tracing is required for all COVID-19 cases during a COVID-19 outbreak in the outbreak exposure setting. A COVID-19 outbreak defined below is 3 or more cases of COVID-19 among children and/or staff, without other identified epidemiological linkages within 14 days, in a specific exposure setting. Individuals identified as close contacts can participate in the TTS program if they meet the eligibility requirements.
Definitions	<p>CDC Isolation and Quarantine Calculator: A tool to help determine how long individuals need to isolate, quarantine, or take other steps to prevent spreading COVID-19. Click Get Started</p> <p><u>Isolation:</u> Separation of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection from those who are not infected. MCOPH follows the requirements for isolation provided by CDC.</p> <p><u>Quarantine:</u> Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent the spread of disease that can occur before a person experiences symptoms or knows if they are infected with the virus. Close contacts not participating in TTS should stay home, separate themselves from others, and continue to monitor their health.</p> <p>Following CDC guidance, MCOPH requires the following individuals to quarantine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who are not Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccine • Individuals who have had a positive COVID-19 test within the last 90 days. <p>For more information on when individuals are to date with COVID-19 vaccination, visit CDC Stay Up to Date with Your Vaccines</p> <p>Up to Date on Vaccine: Up to date means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.</p> <p>Household Exposure: A positive individual who lives in the same home as an exposed individual (i.e., roommate, significant other, family member) who exposes their household members to COVID-19 on an ongoing basis.</p>

	<p>COVID-19 Symptoms: Those exhibiting the following symptoms are not eligible for TTS and should be excluded for testing, and/or follow up with a health care provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever or chills • Cough • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing • Fatigue • Muscle or body aches • Headache • New loss of taste or smell • Sore throat • Congestion or runny nose • Nausea or vomiting • Diarrhea <p>Asymptomatic: Producing or showing no symptoms. Asymptomatic individuals are eligible for TTS.</p> <p>Close Contact: Individuals within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for 15 consecutive minutes, regardless of masking.</p> <p>Outbreak: MCOPH defines an outbreak as 3 or more cases of COVID-19 among children and/or staff, without other identified epidemiological linkages within 14 days, in a specific exposure setting. When an outbreak is identified, childcare facilities are required to complete contact tracing to identify any close contacts to the positive cases. During the time of outbreak response, facilities should reach out to MCOPH for additional guidance and prevention strategies to decrease the risk of spread (e.g., masking, testing). Contact tracing is required during an outbreak.</p> <p>Exposure Setting: A specific exposure setting can be defined as a classroom, core group, or cohort. Classroom staff and/or children that combine or move around during the day to meet ratios should also be considered when identifying close contacts and outbreaks.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Teacher A tested positive for COVID-19 and usually works in the Toddler 1 Room. That day, Teacher A combined her Toddler 1 Class with the Toddler 2 Class to relieve staff at the end of the day and continue to meet ratio. Due to the combination of classes, both the Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 rooms were potentially exposed and contact tracing should occur for the <i>specified exposure setting</i>.</p> <p>Testing Cadence: A term used to describe the order or schedule in which testing should be completed.</p>
<p>Children/ Staff Eligibility Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual(s) identified as close contact to an individual who is diagnosed with COVID-19 in ECE or in the community. This does not include close contacts exposed to a household positive.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual(s) who meet the requirement for those who need to quarantine (<i>see above</i>). • Individual is asymptomatic (without any signs or symptoms of COVID-19). • Individual is 2 years of age or older. • Masks must be worn at all times around other people indoors and outdoors. An individual who has a mask exemption or cannot mask consistently will not be eligible for TTS and will have to complete the traditional 10-day COVID-19 quarantine. For TTS a face shield is not acceptable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Masks may be removed during napping and eating, but 6 feet distancing should be observed where <i>feasible</i>. • The individual and/or the guardian consents to receive and participate in testing provided in accordance with TTS testing cadence.
<p>COVID-19 Testing Cadence</p>	<p>Individuals are required to participate in two COVID-19 antigen tests as part of TTS. The COVID-19 antigen tests must be completed in the presence of an appointed childcare facility staff member and should be administered by the parent or guardian.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first test must be administered between days 2 through 3 of quarantine/ last exposure. The test needs to be completed prior to entry into the ECE facility. • A second test must be administered between days 4 through 6 of quarantine/ last exposure. The test needs to be completed prior to entry into the ECE facility. <p>If the childcare facility is not in session during the required testing period, the test should be obtained the next school day or prior to the end of quarantine (day 10).</p> <p>It is up to the childcare facility to determine the logistics of testing. The facility may consider creating a testing schedule and procedure that works for their facility.</p> <p>The individual will no longer be able to participate in TTS if the individual tests positive, becomes symptomatic, or has household exposure. These individuals should immediately be sent home and follow isolation and quarantine guidelines.</p> <p>At home antigen testing can be used for individuals participating in TTS, but may not be permitted for other testing requirements set forth by licensing and certification agencies (I.e., return after isolation, or return after exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms).</p>

<p>Consistent and Correct Masking Use</p>	<p>Masks must be worn at all times around other people, even while participating in extracurricular activities and outdoors. If masks cannot be worn, the individual(s) cannot participate in activities for ten days from the last day of exposure.</p> <p>Masks can be removed briefly for napping, eating, and drinking. When masks are removed, 6 feet of physical distancing should be observed when <i>feasible</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy of napping head-to-toe can be used for those participating in TTS. <p>Individuals under TTS should not participate in activities where the mask can get wet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e., water play, swimming <p>For additional masking guidance visit CDC Mask Guidance.</p>
<p>Enhanced Symptom Screening</p>	<p>Increase active symptom screening for individuals participating in TTS by the childcare facility and parents/guardians. The facility must complete a symptom check for those participating in TTS prior to entry into the building. Any symptom observed would exclude the individual from TTS. Staff are encouraged to continue symptom monitoring throughout the day to identify if an individual develops signs of illness.</p> <p>If an individual in TTS develops COVID-like symptoms according to CDC's guidelines they should isolate immediately. The individual will no longer be able to participate in TTS and should complete the standard isolation to help support reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19.</p>
<p>Extra-Curricular Activities</p>	<p>Masks must be worn at all times during extracurricular activities to participate in TTS. If masks cannot be worn during rigorous exertion activities, the exposed individual(s) cannot participate until ten days after the exposure.</p>
<p>Quarantine Outside of the ECE Setting</p>	<p>Individuals who participate in TTS are required to complete standard quarantine (as described above) outside of the ECE setting. Individuals can stay in care and participate in extra-curricular activities through TTS.</p>
<p>Internal Tracking System</p>	<p>All ECE should follow requirements for the case reporting to OCDEL, ELRC, and MCOPH. Childcare facilities should be prepared to provide MCOPH with additional information pertaining to participants in the TTS program if requested.</p> <p>ECE programs can use the Test to Stay Tracking Spreadsheet for ECE Programs to track and manage Test to Stay programs in ECE settings. MCOPH encourages ECE programs to use this tool while rolling out any new Test to Stay Programs. MCOPH can request data collected using this tool at any time.</p>

References:

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Science Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Updated December 6, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/masking-science-sars-cov2.html>

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