

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

Recent Updates:

8/23/20: Home Isolation period changed from 72 hours to 24 hours with no fever. The period that someone is considered to be infectious, changed from 48 hours to 2 days before symptoms begin. Provided additional clarification on epidemiologically linked cases and updated the COVID-19 Outbreak Criteria (changes highlighted in yellow).

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.

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 in the event of a COVID-19 cluster or outbreak at the ECE setting.

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

Required: After identifying 1 laboratory confirmed COVID-19 case (child or employee), ECE Provider instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona_2019/covidisolation/).

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 Provider works with the case to generate a list of children and /or employees with exposure to the case while infectious. The ECE Provider provides DPH with the names and contact information of the case and ECE center contacts, ideally within 1 business day of notification of a case. If needed, additional time may be requested.

- 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 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 to be infectious from **2 days** before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.
- A person is considered to have been exposed if they are one of the following:
 - An individual who was within 6 feet of the infected person for more than 15 minutes, even if a non-medical face covering was worn;
 - An individual who had unprotected contact with the infected person's body fluids and/or secretions of a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing utensils or saliva, or providing care without using appropriate protective equipment).

Required: Children and employees 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 Education Settings](#). The notification of exposure should include the following messages:

- Employees and children with an exposure to the case should test for COVID-19, whether or not they have symptoms, and inform the ECE Provider of test results. This will determine the extent of disease spread at the ECE site and serve as a basis for further control measures. Testing resources include: Employee Health Services or Occupational Health Services, Personal Healthcare Providers, Community Testing Locations: covid19.lacounty.gov/testing. Individuals who need assistance finding a medical provider can call the LA County Information line 2-1-1, which is available 24/7.
- Exposed employees and children should quarantine for 14 days since last exposure to the case while infectious (as defined above), even if they receive a negative test result during their quarantine period. A person who tests negative may subsequently develop disease, with or without symptoms, if tested during the incubation period (i.e., time period between exposure and disease onset). Home Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 is available at: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona_2019/covidquarantine/.
- DPH will contact exposed employees and children through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Quarantine.

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 Education Settings](#).

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

Required: After identifying 2 laboratory confirmed cases (children and/or employees) within a 14-day period, ECE Provider follows the *required* steps for 1 confirmed case.

Recommended: ECE Provider determines 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.*

*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 to be 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. A tool is available to assist in the assessment of epidemiological links at: [COVID-19 Exposure Investigation Worksheet for the Education Sector](#). For technical assistance on how to assess for epidemiological links, please contact ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
- If epidemiological links do not exist, the ECE Provider continues with routine exposure management.
- If epidemiological links exist, the ECE Provider reinforces messages to children, parents/caregivers/guardians and employees on precautions to take to prevent spread at the setting, including implementation of site-specific interventions.

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 laboratory confirmed cases among children and/or employees within a 14-day period, the ECE Provider should proceed with the following steps:

- Report the cluster to the DPH Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) Education Sector Team within 1 business day by email at: ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov or by calling (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821.
- Complete the *Line List for Cases and Contacts*, available at: [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector](#) and submit it to ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov. For technical assistance on how to complete the line list contact ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
- The ACDC Education Sector Team will review the *Line List for Cases and Contacts* to determine whether the outbreak criteria have been met. The ACDC team will contact the ECE Provider within 1 business day to advise on next steps.

- If outbreak criteria are not met, the ECE Provider continues with routine exposure management.
- If outbreak criteria are met, the DPH Outbreak Management Branch (OMB) is activated.
- An OMB public health investigator is assigned to coordinate with the ECE Provider on outbreak management for the duration of the outbreak investigation.
- ECE Provider COVID-19 Liaison will submit requested information, including updates to the *Line List for Cases and Contacts* to the OMB Investigator until the outbreak is resolved.

Recommended: Prior to reporting the cluster to the DPH ACDC Education Sector Team, ECE Provider will determine whether at least 3 cases in the cluster have epidemiological links. A tool is available to assist in the assessment of epidemiological links at: [COVID-19 Exposure Investigation Worksheet for the Education Sector](#).

COVID-19 Outbreak Criteria for Early Care and Education Sites

At least 3 laboratory-confirmed cases at the ECE site with symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 within a 14-day period in a group* with members who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a household, and are not a close contact of each other outside the campus.

**Groups include persons that share common membership (e.g., same classroom, ECE event, or ECE extracurricular activity). Epidemiological links require the infected persons to have been present at some point in the same setting during the same time period while infectious.*

Appendix A: Steps for Managing Exposures to 1, 2, and 3 or More COVID-19 Cases at ECE Site

1 Case	<p>1) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions(a).</p> <p>2) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider informs the case that DPH will contact the case directly to collect additional information and issue Health Officer Order for Isolation (a).</p> <p>3) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider works with case to identify ECE center contacts.</p> <p>4) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider notifies* ECE center contacts of exposure and instructs them to quarantine at home (b) and test for COVID-19.</p> <p>5) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider informs ECE center contacts that DPH will follow up to collect additional information and issue Health Officer Order for Quarantine (b).</p> <p>6) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider submits contact information for case and site contacts using the COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector and sends to DPH at ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.</p> <p>7) <i>Recommended:</i> ECE Provider sends general notification* to inform the wider ECE center of the site exposure and precautions being taken to prevent spread.</p> <p>*Templates for contact notification and general notification are available at: COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings.</p>
2 Cases	<p>1) <i>Required:</i> Follow required steps for 1 confirmed case.</p> <p>2) <i>Recommended:</i> If the 2 cases occurred within 14 days of each other, ECE Provider determines whether the cases have epidemiological (epi) links exist. A COVID-19 Exposure Investigation Worksheet for the Education Sector tool is available to help assess for epi links. If epi links exist: ECE sites implements additional infection control measures.</p>
3+ Cases	<p>1) <i>Required:</i> If a cluster of 3 or more cases occurred within 14 days of each other, ECE Provider notifies DPH at: ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.</p> <p>2) <i>Recommended:</i> Prior to notifying DPH of the cluster, ECE Provider determines whether at least 3 cases have epi links.</p> <p><i>Required:</i> DPH requests that the COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector be completed by the ECE Provider to determine if the outbreak criteria have been met. If outbreak criteria are met, DPH Outbreak Management Branch (OMB) is activated and an OMB investigator will contact the ECE site to coordinate the outbreak investigation.</p> <p>3) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider provides updates to the OMB investigator until the outbreak is resolved.</p>
	<p>(a) Health Officer Order, cases directed to self-isolate until 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 OR, if case has no symptoms, until 10 days have passed after their positive test was taken. http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/covidisolation/.</p> <p>(b) Health Officer Order, contacts directed to quarantine for 14 days since date of last exposure to case while infectious. http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/covidquarantine/.</p>