

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

Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow):

9/23/2021:

- Added the link to the Early Care and Education COVID-19 Toolkit.
- Added a requirement to report all COVID-19 hospitalizations or deaths among students or staff to DPH.
- Added a shortened quarantine option for exposed persons who remain asymptomatic and have a specimen collected on Day 5 or later after the date of last exposure and tests negative.
- Clarified that ECE site employees may return to work after completing the quarantine period per Public Health's Emergency Quarantine Order.
- Reorganized content to simplify reading and comprehension.

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. Note: Testing is not required for asymptomatic individuals who are fully

vaccinated¹ or who have recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days unless Public Health deems it necessary as part of an active investigation.

- ❑ **Required:** A plan to report all known COVID-19 hospitalizations and/or deaths among students 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 persons who have 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.
- ❑ **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](#)

¹ Fully vaccinated is defined as two weeks or more have passed since receiving the second dose in a 2-dose vaccine series OR two weeks or more have passed since receiving a single-dose vaccine.

(Template1). The notification of exposure should include the following messages:

- DPH will contact persons with an exposure at the site who meet the quarantine requirement through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Quarantine.
- 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](#).
- Persons with an exposure to the case at the site 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, [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. Exposed persons who are not exempted from quarantine (see exemptions below) 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 they do not develop symptoms of COVID-19 they may end quarantine either:
 - After 10 full days have passed from their last known contact with the infectious case (as defined above). Activities may resume starting on Day 11. They must continue to monitor their health and adhere to COVID-19 prevention precautions through Day 14.
 - After 7 full days have passed from their last known contact with the infectious case if they have a negative viral test result from a specimen collected on or after Day 5 from the date of last exposure to the case. Activities may resume starting on Day 8. They must continue to monitor their health and adhere to COVID-19 prevention precautions through Day 14. Note the test must be an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test, including a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site.
- The following close contacts are exempt from quarantine provided they remain asymptomatic:
 - Persons who are [fully vaccinated](#).
 - Persons who have recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days.

Even though they do not need to quarantine, they must monitor for symptoms and strictly adhere to COVID-19 precautions for 14 days from their last exposure. It is recommended that fully vaccinated persons get a viral test 3-5 days after their last exposure. No testing is recommended for persons who have recently recovered from COVID-19. See [Quarantine and Other Instructions for Close Contacts](#).

- 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.**

Appendix A: Steps for Managing Exposures to COVID-19 Cases at an ECE Site

1 Case	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions.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.3) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider works with DPH to identify ECE center contacts.4) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider notifies ECE contacts of exposure. ECE contacts are instructed to quarantine at home and test for COVID-19 due to their exposure.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.6) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider submits a report to DPH within 1 business day with information on the confirmed case and persons who were exposed to the case at the site.7) <i>Recommended:</i> ECE Provider sends a general notification* to inform the ECE center of the site exposure and precautions being taken to prevent spread.
2 Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <i>Required:</i> Follow required steps for 1 confirmed case.2) <i>Recommended:</i> If the 2 cases occurred within 14 days of each other, ECE Provider works with DPH to determine whether the cases have epidemiological (epi) links. If epi links exist: ECE site implements additional infection control measures.
3+ Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <i>Required:</i> If a cluster of 3 or more cases occurred within 14 days of each other, ECE Provider immediately notifies DPH by reporting online at: http://www.redcap.link/lacdph.educationsector.covidreport.2) <i>Required:</i> DPH determines if the outbreak criteria have been met. If outbreak criteria are met, a DPH outbreak investigation is activated, and a public health investigator will contact the ECE site to coordinate the outbreak investigation.