Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow)

4/5/2023
- This update aligns with the new California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine of the General Public that took effect on March 13, 2023.
- Updates also reflect the new Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidelines for COVID-19 Cases (Isolation) and Close Contacts that went into effect on March 13, 2023.
- Clarifies that staff and children who are infected with COVID-19 must stay home and cannot return to the ECE site until the criteria to end isolation have been met.
- Notification of child close contacts has changed to a strong recommendation.

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’s (LAC DPH) COVID-19 response.

Early Care and Education (ECE) Providers are trusted community partners that can help LAC 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 the spread of COVID-19 and prevent outbreaks from occurring.

The steps for managing exposures to COVID-19 cases at ECE sites are described below. 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 COVID-19 Cases at the ECE Site

- **Required:** A designated ECE Center COVID-19 Liaison who is responsible for serving as a liaison to LAC DPH for sharing site-level information to facilitate public health action.

- **Required:** A plan to report all ECE center-associated clusters of 3 or more epidemiologically-linked COVID-19 cases within 1 business day of being notified of the third, or last, case in the cluster and all
known COVID-19 hospitalizations and/or deaths among children or staff to DPH by sending a notification to ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov. Epidemiologically-linked cases are individuals who were present at some point in the same setting during the same time period while either or both were infectious, even without an identified close contact.

### Exposure Management for COVID-19 Cases at the ECE Site

- **Children and staff with confirmed COVID-19 infection (cases) must stay home and away from others (isolate) and follow all isolation instructions, regardless of their vaccination status, history of previous infection, or lack of symptoms.** (Refer to Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19 ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation.)
  - A confirmed COVID-19 case is a person who has received a positive result of the presence of SARS-CoV-2 virus as confirmed by a COVID-19 viral test or clinical diagnosis.

- **Persons with symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection, regardless of vaccination status or previous infection, should isolate and test for COVID-19.** Refer to DPH’s [Learn about Symptoms and What to do if You are Sick](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/covid19_symptoms.html).

- **Children and staff with COVID-19 may end isolation after Day 5* (i.e., between Days 6-10) if both of the following criteria are met:**
  1) No fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, **AND**
  2) Other symptoms are not present, or symptoms are mild and improving.

*For symptomatic children and staff, Day 0 is the first day of symptoms; Day 1 is the first full day after symptoms develop. For children and staff who never develop symptoms, Day 0 is the day the first positive test was collected; Day 1 is the first full day after the positive test was collected. Please note that if they develop symptoms, their new Day 0 is the first day of symptoms.

**It is strongly recommended** that an individual test negative (with an antigen test) for COVID-19 prior to ending isolation between Day 6-10 to reduce the chance of infecting others with COVID-19.

- **Persons who continue to have symptoms of COVID-19 that are not improving should continue to isolate until their symptoms are improving or until after Day 10.**

- **Persons who have left isolation and have a return or worsening of their COVID-19 symptoms need to re-test (with an antigen test).** If they test positive, they should re-start isolation at Day 0.

- **For children aged 2 years and older, if they meet the criteria to leave isolation after Day 5, they should continue to wear a well-fitting mask indoors around others, except when eating or drinking, through Day 10. They may stop wearing their mask sooner (between Day 6-10) if they have two sequential negative COVID-19 tests taken at least 24 hours apart.**

**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 aged 2 to 8 years should wear a mask under adult supervision. See Who should not wear a mask and Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities.

- For staff requirements related to isolation, refer to Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations. Employers must review and follow these regulations for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in the workplace setting. Additional information may be found in the COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations FAQs and DPH’s Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace.

❑ It is strongly recommended that parents immediately inform ECE sites when a child tests positive for COVID-19 and was present on site during the child’s infectious period.*

*The infectious period is:

- For symptomatic confirmed cases: Persons who have tested positive on a COVID-19 viral test or received a clinical diagnosis of COVID-19 (i.e., a confirmed case) are considered infectious starting 2 days before their symptoms began (symptom onset is Day 0) until their isolation ends (i.e., through Days 6-10 after symptoms first appeared AND 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines, and symptoms have improved).

- For asymptomatic confirmed cases: Persons who have tested positive on a COVID-19 viral test and never develop symptoms are infectious starting 2 days before their test was taken (test collection day is Day 0) until their isolation ends (after Day 5).

❑ When ECE sites are notified of a confirmed COVID-19 case, it is strongly recommended that they notify the children who were exposed to the COVID-19 case during the case’s infectious period and provide them with actions to take for close contacts. ECE sites are required to notify employees if they have been exposed to a known case of COVID-19 in the workplace during the case’s infectious period, as per Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations.

❑ Close Contacts: Persons are considered to have been exposed to a COVID-19 case (close contact) during the case’s infectious period if:

In indoor airspaces that are 400,000 cubic feet or less per floor: They shared the same indoor airspace at the center with the infected person (case) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during an infected person’s infectious period.

In indoor airspaces that are greater than 400,000 cubic feet per floor: They were within 6 feet of the infected person (case) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infected person’s infectious period. NOTE: Spaces that are separated by floor-to-ceiling walls (e.g., offices, suites, break/eating areas separated by floor-to-ceiling walls) are considered distinct indoor airspaces.

NOTE: Persons with an outdoor exposure at the ECE facility are not considered close contacts.
Close contacts to a COVID-19 case should take the following actions:

- Close contacts who have or develop symptoms of COVID-19 infection, regardless of vaccination status or previous infection, must stay home away from others and test for COVID-19.
- Close contacts who do not have symptoms (asymptomatic) do not need to stay home away from others but should take the following actions to lower the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others:
  1. Wear a well-fitting mask around others through Day 10, especially in indoor settings, for those aged 2 years and older, except when eating, drinking, or napping.
     - Children aged 2 years and older who have a mask exemption* and have been exposed should wear a face shield with drape at the bottom if their condition allows. For children who cannot tolerate a mask or a face shield with drape at the bottom, they should monitor their health for symptoms for 10 days after last exposure AND test for COVID-19 immediately after exposure and a second time between Days 3-5 after the last date of exposure, with at least 24 hours between the first and second tests.
     - Infants and children under 2 years of age (or less than 24 months) should not wear a mask. Children under 2 years or age who are close contacts and asymptomatic may remain at the facility if they are monitored for symptoms and test for COVID-19 within 3-5 days after the last date of exposure.
     - Children ages 2 to 8 should wear a mask under adult supervision.
  2. Test for COVID-19 between Days 3-5 after the last date of exposure.
     - Close contacts who recently tested positive for COVID-19 within the prior 30 days do not need to be tested unless symptoms develop.
     - Close contacts who recently tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 31-90 days should use an antigen test.
     - Close contacts who are or live with persons at higher risk for severe illness are recommended to test as soon as possible after exposure. If testing negative before Day 3, retest during the 3–5 day window following exposure, with at least 24 hours between the first and second tests.
     - Close contacts who test positive for COVID-19 must stay home away from others and follow the instructions for a confirmed COVID-19 case outlined above. Refer to DPH’s Guidelines for COVID-19 Cases (Isolation) and Close Contacts.
  3. Monitor their health for symptoms for 10 days after the last date of exposure. If symptoms develop, stay away from others and test immediately. If the test is positive, they must stay home away from others and follow the instructions for a confirmed COVID-19 case.
Refer to Instructions for Close Contacts for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidcontacts) for details.

*Individuals may be exempt from wearing a mask for the following reasons (refer to Guidance for Early Childhood Education Providers Requirements and Best Practices for additional information): 1) persons younger than two years of age; 2) persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication; and 3) persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability or whose medical provider has determined that it is unsafe for them to wear a mask, may file for an exemption with their school. A certification from a state licensed health care provider attesting that the child has a condition or disability that precludes them from wearing a mask safely can be accepted as proof of exemption. The following licensed health care professionals may provide such attestations: Medical providers including physician (MD or DO), nurse practitioner (NP), or physician assistant (PA) practicing under the authority of a licensed physician; and licensed mental and behavioral health practitioners including Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), clinical psychologist (Psy.D. or Ph.D.), Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC), or Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT).

- Staff who are close contacts exposed at work must follow the guidance outlined in Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations. Additional information can also be found in DPH’s Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace.
  - Staff may request masks and respirators from their employer at no cost to staff. See Wear a Mask and Know your Rights for more information.
  - Employers must make COVID-19 testing available at no cost and during paid time in a manner that ensures employee confidentiality to staff who are close contacts. See Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations Frequently Asked Questions-Testing.

The ECE Center COVID-19 Liaison must notify Public Health of all clusters of 3 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a classroom, office, or other pre-defined or identifiable group (e.g., cohort) who were linked and on site at any point within the 14 days prior to illness onset date (ECE-associated cases). Cases include employees, children/students, and visitors with confirmed COVID-19.

- All ECE-associated COVID-19 clusters should be reported online through the secure web application the Shared Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT): https://spot.cdph.ca.gov/s/?language=en_US. If there are multiple cases to report, facilities can submit their reports using the “Bulk Upload Template” located within the SPOT Portal.
- All clusters with information for the cases should be reported to Public Health immediately, and no later than 1 business day of being notified of the third, or last, case in the cluster.
- ECE Providers that need assistance on COVID-19 cluster reporting or other exposure management guidance can call the Education Sector COVID-19 Cluster Reporting Call Center, Monday through Friday from 8:00AM to 5:00PM. ECE administrators that do not have the Call
Center number should contact ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.

- ECE Provider will consult with Public Health as needed to confirm whether the cases within the reported cluster are epidemiologically linked, meaning that the affected individuals were present at some point in the same setting during the same time period while one or all of them were infectious.

- If epidemiological links exist, Public Health will advise the ECE Provider on important steps to take and communications to children, their families, and employees on precautions to take to prevent further spread at the site, including implementation of site-specific interventions for infection control.

- Public Health will determine if the outbreak criteria have been met: at least 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a 14-day period of each other in a specified group* with members who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a household, and are not a close contact of each other outside of the campus.

  - If outbreak criteria are met and DPH recommends an outbreak response, DPH will notify the ECE Provider that an outbreak investigation has been activated and a Public Health Outbreak Investigator will communicate directly with the site to coordinate the response.

    NOTE: In outbreak settings, the Public Health Outbreak Investigator may implement temporary strategies that are more protective than these guidelines to prevent further spread of COVID-19 at the site.

*Specified group include persons that share a common membership at the site (e.g., classroom, event, transportation, and office). 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 COVID-19 Cases at an ECE Site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-2 cases</th>
<th>3+ Cases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td><strong>4)</strong> DPH determines if the outbreak criteria have been met. If a DPH outbreak investigation is activated, a Public Health Outbreak Investigator will contact the ECE site to coordinate the outbreak investigation.</td>
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