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

Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow):

3/21/2022

- Updated to allow all children of all ages with COVID-19 to end isolation after Day 5 and return to the ECE facility provided they have (1) a negative test on or after Day 5, (2) are fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication and (3) other symptoms are improving.
- Updated to allow children of all ages with an exposure at the ECE facility to remain onsite at the facility after exposure provided they test once within 3-5 days after the last exposure date.

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.

- **Required:** A plan to report all known COVID-19 hospitalizations and/or deaths among children 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 Symptoms and Exposures 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.

- Children (of any age) and staff with COVID-19 can end isolation after Day* 5 and return to the facility on Days 6-10 ONLY if all of the following criteria are met: 1. A COVID-19 viral test** collected on Day 5 or later is negative, and 2. No fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, and 3. Other symptoms are improving --or-- Isolation can end after Day 10 if both these 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 are 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 asymptomatic children and staff, Day 0 is the day the first positive test was collected; Day 1 is the first full day after the positive test was collected. **The test must be an FDA authorized viral test (e.g., PCR or Antigen test, including at-home tests). An antigen test is preferred for testing out of isolation.

- NOTE: For staff, per Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS), testing that is required for employees must be provided by the employer free of charge and during work hours; these tests may not be self-administered or self-read unless they are observed by the employer or an authorized telehealth proctor. Additionally, 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.

- Regardless of when isolation ends, children aged 2 years and older with COVID-19 are strongly recommended to wear a highly protective mask around others, except for eating and drinking or when napping, for 10 days after symptom onset (or, if no symptoms, 10 days after the positive test date). Staff with COVID-19 are required to wear a highly protective mask in the workplace around others, except when eating or drinking, for 10 days after symptom onset (or, if no symptoms, 10 days after the positive test date). See ph.lacounty.gov/masks for more information.

- 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 ages 2 to 8 should wear a mask only when under adult supervision. See Who should not wear a mask and Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities.

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. 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 their isolation ends, as described in the Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). A person with a positive COVID-19 test but no symptoms is considered infectious from 2 days before their test was taken until their isolation period ends.

- Close Contact: 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:
Secure online reporting is the preferred method for notifying DPH of COVID-19 cases 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 of the exposure and next steps for managing the exposure. Refer to COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Early Care and Education Sites (Template1) for a model that can be adapted.

Action for close contacts who are required to quarantine*

- The following close contacts are required to quarantine:
  - Children who are not fully vaccinated
  - Children who are fully vaccinated and not boosted (if eligible)
  - Staff who are not fully vaccinated
  - Staff who are fully vaccinated and not boosted (if eligible)

*Children and staff who were previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the last 90 days are exempt from testing, regardless of vaccination status, as long as they remain free of symptoms.

- Asymptomatic children (of any age) who are close contacts and (1) not fully vaccinated or (2) fully vaccinated and not boosted (if eligible) may remain onsite at the ECE facility during the quarantine period, however they are required to test** once within 3-5 days after the last exposure date. It is strongly recommended that children aged 2 years and older mask for 10 days after the last date of exposure. Requirement to quarantine continues to apply to all settings other than the ECE facility.

- Asymptomatic fully vaccinated staff who are close contacts and not boosted (if eligible) may remain on site at the ECE facility during the quarantine period, however they are required to test** once within 3-5 days after the last exposure date. Requirement to quarantine continues to apply to all settings other than the ECE facility. They may be released from the requirement to quarantine outside of the workplace after Day 5 from the date of last exposure if the test** is negative. This guidance is outlined in Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS).

**The test must be an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test (e.g., NAAT or Antigen test, including over-the-counter or at-home tests). For staff, per Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS), testing that is required for employees must be provided by the employer free of charge and during work hours; these tests may not be self-administered or self-read unless they are observed by the employer or an authorized telehealth proctor.
Close contacts who are required to quarantine 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 symptoms of COVID-19 are not present they may end quarantine either:

- After 10 full days have passed from their last known contact to the infectious case (as defined above). Activities may resume starting on Day 11 provided they are asymptomatic; OR

- After 5 full days have passed from their last known contact to the infectious case if they have a negative viral test result from a specimen collected on Day 5 from the date of last exposure to the case. Activities may resume starting on Day 6. The test must be an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test (e.g., NAAT or Antigen test, including over the counter or at-home tests). If the test is positive, follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).

- NOTE: for staff, per Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS), testing that is required for employees must be provided by the employer free of charge and during work hours; these tests may not be self-administered or self-read unless they are observed by the employer or an authorized telehealth proctor.

Regardless of when quarantine ends, close contacts must continue to monitor their health. Staff must wear a highly protective mask when around others for 10 days after their last exposure date, both indoors and outdoors, except when eating or drinking. It is strongly recommended that children aged 2 years and older mask for 10 days after the last exposure date. The mask should be a well-fitting medical mask or respirator or a well-fitting non-cloth* mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose-wire.

*Cloth masks meeting ASTM standards for high filtration efficiency (ASTM F3502-level 2) are permitted. For children, masks may be removed during nap time. See ph.lacounty.gov/masks for more information.

If symptoms develop, test using an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test and stay home.

Action for close contacts who are not required to quarantine*

- The following close contacts are not required to quarantine provided they remain asymptomatic:
  - Children who are fully vaccinated and not eligible for a booster
  - Children who are fully vaccinated and boosted (if eligible)
  - Staff who are fully vaccinated and not eligible for a booster
  - Staff who are fully vaccinated and boosted (if eligible)

*Children and staff who were previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the last 90 days are exempt from testing, regardless of vaccination status, as long as they remain free of symptoms.

Asymptomatic fully vaccinated children who are (1) not eligible for a booster or (2) boosted (if eligible) may remain onsite at the ECE facility if exposed, however, it is **recommended** that they test** once within 3-5 days after the last exposure date.

Asymptomatic fully vaccinated staff who are (1) not eligible for a booster or (2) boosted (if eligible) may remain onsite at the ECE facility if exposed, however, it is **recommended**
that they test** once within 3-5 days after the last exposure date.

**The test must be an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test (e.g., NAAT or Antigen test, including over-the-counter or at-home tests). For staff, per Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS), testing that is required for employees must be provided by the employer free of charge and during work hours; these tests may not be self-administered or self-read unless they are observed by the employer or an authorized telehealth proctor.

- In addition, they must monitor for symptoms. Staff must wear a highly protective mask when around others for 10 days after their last exposure date, both indoors and outdoors, except when eating or drinking. It is strongly recommended that children aged 2 years and older mask for 10 days after exposure. The mask should be a well-fitting medical mask or respirator or a well-fitting non-cloth* mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose-wire. *Cloth masks meeting ASTM standards for high filtration efficiency (ASTM F3502-level 2) are permitted. For children, masks may be removed during nap time. See ph.lacounty.gov/masks for more information. If symptoms develop, test using an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test and stay home. If the test is positive, follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).

- 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.

- ECE facilities are required to have a plan to facilitate COVID-19 response testing for persons who have an exposure at the ECE facility. Staff and children who are tested must inform the ECE facility of the test results. 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. 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/lacdpheducationsector.covidreport](http://www.redcap.link/lacdpheducationsector.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](ph.lacounty.gov) 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 and DPH recommends an outbreak response, DPH will notify the ECE Provider that an outbreak investigation is activated and a public health investigator will communicate directly with the provider to coordinate the response.
### Appendix A: Steps for Managing Exposures to COVID-19 Cases at an ECE Site

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<tr>
<th>1 Case</th>
<th>2 Cases</th>
<th>3+ Cases</th>
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| 1) *Required:* ECE Provider instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions.  
2) *Required:* ECE Provider works with DPH to identify ECE center close contacts.  
3) *Required:* ECE Provider notifies ECE contacts of exposure.  
4) *Required:* ECE Provider submits a report to DPH within 1 business day with information on the confirmed case.  
5) *Recommended:* ECE Provider sends a general notification to inform the ECE center of the site exposure and precautions being taken to prevent spread. | 1) *Required:* Follow required steps for 1 confirmed case.  
2) *Recommended:* 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. | 1) *Required:* 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](http://www.redcap.link/lacdph.educationsector.covidreport).  
2) *Required:* DPH determines if the outbreak criteria have been met. If outbreak criteria are met. If a DPH outbreak investigation is activated, a public health investigator will contact the ECE site to coordinate the outbreak investigation. |