NYC Health

COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Programs

This guidance provides best practice considerations for child care programs to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 among children and staff. These everyday preventive actions can help support healthy learning environments.

COVID-19 Prevention Measures

Get Vaccinated

Vaccination is the best way to prevent COVID-19. Encourage up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination for all eligible children and staff.

- "Up-to-date" includes boosters for everyone who is eligible and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people. For more information, visit **cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/COVID-19-vacc-schedule-at-a-glance-508.pdf**.
- Nonpublic facilities and programs may choose to establish policies for all children or staff to have up-to-date vaccinations to attend work or school.

Wear a Mask

A mask helps protect the person who is wearing it and helps prevent people, including those without symptoms who do not know they are sick, from spreading the virus to others. Child care programs should establish "mask-positive" environments so those who wear a mask feel comfortable. Children ages 2 and older and staff, regardless of vaccination status:

- **Are required** to wear a mask when:
  - Returning to child care after testing positive for COVID-19 through Day 10 after symptom onset or date of positive test, whichever is earlier, including when traveling on a school bus
  - Entering the facility medical room, nurse's office or school-based health center
  - Exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 at child care
- **Are strongly encouraged** to wear a mask:
  - When they were exposed to someone with COVID-19, whether the exposure occurred in the child care facility or outside the facility. The person should wear a mask for 10 days after their last day of exposure and get tested on Day 5.
  - If they are moderately to severely immunocompromised and masking is recommended by their health care provider
  - In crowded indoor settings
- **May choose to wear a mask** at all times, or in specific circumstances such as when:
  - Traveling on school buses
  - They feel more comfortable wearing a mask, such as for personal health reasons or because they live with someone at higher risk for severe COVID-19

Stay Home If Sick
Instruct children, their caregivers and your staff to stay home if they show any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses and to get tested for COVID-19.

Isolate If You Test Positive for COVID-19
- Children and staff who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for five days and can return to the program on Day 6 if they have no symptoms or symptoms are improving. They should wear a mask when attending child care until Day 10 after symptom onset or date of positive test, **or** they may remove their mask following two negative COVID-19 tests taken 48 hours apart.
- Children who are younger than age 2 or anyone who cannot consistently and correctly wear a mask can return to the child care program on Day 6 if symptoms are resolving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- To report a positive COVID-19 test result, contact your borough office. They can help provide further information. To find your borough office's contact information, visit **on.nyc.gov/child-care-boro-offices**.

Get Tested If Exposed to COVID-19
Children and staff who are exposed to COVID-19 should get tested.
- Children and staff who are exposed may attend child care as long as they are free of symptoms. These individuals should get tested five days after their last exposure and wear a high-quality, well-fitting mask for 10 days.
- All exposed individuals should monitor for fever and other COVID-19 symptoms for 10 days after their exposure. If symptoms begin, they should not attend child care and should get tested for COVID-19 right away.
- If the test is positive, the individual must isolate according to the guidance above.
- For the purpose of determining length of isolation and masking period: Day 0 is the day of COVID-19 symptom onset and Day 1 is the first full day after the day your symptoms started. If they had no symptoms, Day 0 is the test date and Day 1 is the first full day following the test date.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.   8.31.22