



KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

SHEILA J. POOLE
Commissioner

January 17, 2022

Dear Licensed, Registered or Legally Exempt Group Provider:

This letter explains what to do when someone in your child care program is exposed to COVID-19 through a close contact or tests positive for the virus. This includes you, your staff, volunteers, service providers, household members in home-based programs, and any other person who has contact with children in your care. Remember that vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination among all eligible individuals can help child care programs protect staff and children in their care, as well as their families.

This guidance replaces our communication on December 30, 2021, regarding return-to-work protocols.

For child care programs, the following isolation and quarantine rules apply. A lot of information about how to isolate or quarantine, as well as what to look out for, is available on the Department of Health's website: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/new-york-state-contact-tracing.

A. Isolation

Isolation is for individuals who have been infected with COVID-19, even if they don't have symptoms. Isolation is also for people who are suspected of having COVID-19 because of the symptoms they exhibit. You isolate in order to prevent spreading the virus to others.

Table with 2 columns: Isolation criteria (Children, regardless of vaccination status) and Isolation rules (bullet points regarding symptoms, testing, and duration).

Staff or Volunteers, regardless of vaccination status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child who is immunocompromised or who was hospitalized for COVID-19 should consult their healthcare provider before returning to program • If your child care program is experiencing staff shortages, a staff member or volunteer should isolate for 5 days before returning to work. Then they may return so long as they are not experiencing new or worsening symptoms and are able to wear a well-fitting face mask. • If your child care program is not experiencing staff shortages, a staff member or volunteer should isolate for 10 days before returning to work. • A staff member or volunteer who is immunocompromised or who was hospitalized for COVID-19 should consult their healthcare provider before returning to program
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For home-based programs, if any person (provider, staff, household member) is isolating in the home, they must be completely separated from the child care program while it is operating. If complete separation is not possible, the program may not have any unrelated children in care.

B. QUARANTINE

Quarantine is for someone who has had **exposure** to COVID-19 but who does not have any symptoms of COVID-19/has not tested positive COVID-19. Exposure to COVID-19 occurs when Person A has **close contact** with Person B, who has COVID-19. It is considered close contact if Person A and Person B share the same household or if they were within 6 feet of each other for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period while Person B had COVID-19.

Who has to quarantine following exposure to COVID-19?

If the person exposed to COVID-19: Has been vaccinated and boosted OR Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months OR Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months	<p>No quarantine is required for a student or staff member who is fully vaccinated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a mask around others for 10 days. • Test on day 5, if possible. <p><i>If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.</i></p>
If the person:	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under the age of 2 years, as well as any child who cannot wear a well-fitting mask for any reason, should remain out of

<p>Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Are unvaccinated</p>	<p>the child care program for a full 10 days. If they have no symptoms or their symptoms are resolving after 10 days, they can return to the child care program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children over the age of 2 years who are unvaccinated may return to the child care program after 5 days of quarantine if they are able to wear a well-fitting face mask and provided that they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved. • Any quarantining for exposure should take a COVID-19 test on day 5, if possible. <p>Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your child care program is experiencing staff shortages, an unvaccinated staff member or volunteer should quarantine for 5 days before returning to work, so long as they are not experiencing new or worsening symptoms and are able to wear a well-fitting face mask. • If your child care program is not experiencing staff shortages, an unvaccinated staff member or volunteer should quarantine for 10 days before returning to work. • They should test on day 5 if possible. <p><i>If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.</i></p>
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For home-based programs, if any person (provider, staff, household member) is quarantining in the home, they must be completely separated from the child care program while it is operating. If complete separation is not possible, the program may not have any unrelated children in care.

Please note that the Department of Health has recently issued guidance for K-12 schools. That guidance does NOT apply to child care programs.

Other Information

For all other COVID precautions, please review the recommendations in the CDC's [COVID-19 Guidance for Operating Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dlhd/npd/earlychildcare/operating-early-care-and-education-child-care-programs). The CDC regularly updates this guidance as new information becomes available, so please review it often. This CDC guidance outlines strategies for child care programs to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and maintain safe operations. Many child care programs serve children who are not yet eligible for vaccination. Therefore, the CDC guidance emphasizes using multiple prevention strategies together, including vaccination of staff, families and eligible children, to protect people. The guidance is intended to help programs select appropriate, layered prevention strategies.

As a reminder, masking is still required in child care settings for every person age two and older. See <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/provider-letters/2021/Dear-Provider-2021-Sep-16-Emergency-Face-Covering-Regulation.pdf>.

Thank you for your continued support and flexibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janice Molnar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Janice Molnar, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner
Division of Child Care Services