

January 3, 2023

Parent Information: COVID-19 Childcare Program Protocols

Updates as of October 25th, 2022 *(Based childcare guidelines from Washington State Department of Health-DOH and Public Health Seattle/King County-PHSC)*

Effective 1/17/2023

GENERAL INFORMATION

Protocol Updates: Protocols are subject to change as updates are provided by DOH & PHSC as well as considering the level of community transmission of COVID-19, presence of other people who are at higher risk for severe illness, and the ability to use additional prevention strategies, such as improved ventilation and cohorting, in addition to the vaccination, masking, and testing recommendations.

General Childcare Illness Policy:

We ask that you adhere to the following guidelines when your child is ill. **Please keep at home any child with the following symptoms until resolved:**

- Fever of at least 100.4 °F orally (no-touch thermometer)
- Diarrhea, more than two loose stools per day or stool contains a drop of blood or mucus
- Vomiting, twice or more in the past 24 hours
- Rash, any not associated with heat or allergic reaction
- Drainage from the eye, redness of eyelid lining, swelling and discharge of pus
- Appearance/Behavior: Unusually tired, lack of appetite, confused, irritable, unable to participate in program
- Sore throat: especially with fever and swollen glands
- Head lice or nits: until no lice or nits are present
- Scabies: until after treatment
- Open or oozing sores, unless properly covered and 24 hours have passed since starting antibiotic

Additional symptoms of COVID-19 where any child with these symptoms should also be kept and program director notified. Families will be sent an email from the program director on how the child can be cleared to return to program:

- Fever of at least 100.4 °F orally (no-touch thermometer)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Cough (new, changed or worsening)
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Headache

Accepted COVID-19 Tests:

Molecular (PCR)

Antigen (Rapid, home administered accepted)

COVID-19 Symptomatic (signs of illness) with Negative Test:

If a child with COVID-19 symptoms tests negative, they may return to the program following the existing illness policies *(see above 'General Childcare Illness Policy')*. An email will be sent to families saying a child is cleared to return to program.

Not Tested: If a person with COVID-19 symptoms does not get tested or see a health care provider from whom they receive an alternative diagnosis and provide documentation, they should follow the same isolation guidance as persons who test positive for COVID-19. This is irrespective of vaccination status.

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Isolation – COVID-19 Positive:

Any child with COVID-19 should isolate at home. **This isolation guidance applies regardless of vaccination status.**

“Washington State Department of Health recommends, when an individual is isolating, they should stay home and away from others (including household members) except to get medical care in order to avoid spreading their illness. If a child is excluded from childcare, early learning, or day camp due to isolation, they should not go anywhere except home or to seek medical care. Parents should notify all care providers (e.g., childcare, school) when a child is isolating and thus excluded from all settings. Children identified with symptoms of COVID-19 or who test positive for COVID-19 infection should go or stay home.”

Notification of positive test result:

Parents or guardians of children who test positive for COVID-19 should notify the childcare, early learning, or day camp program immediately upon receipt of test results. This ensures parents receive appropriate information regarding isolation. Parents will be notified when there is a positive case in their child’s cohort.

- **If a child tests positive for COVID-19, they can return to the facility when the following criteria for completing isolation are met:**
 - 5 days* (day 0 through day 5) have passed since symptom onset, or since positive test specimen collection date if no symptoms are present. Day 0 is the first day symptoms appeared, or the day the positive test sample was collected if not symptomatic. (*note: people who are severely ill or severely immunocompromised may need to isolate for up to 20 days); AND
 - No symptoms are currently present, or symptoms have significantly improved; AND
 - No fever within the past 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.
 - If COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, restart isolation at day 0.
- Children should continue to be monitored for symptoms and wear a well-fitting mask around others through day 10 (days 6-10) both in and out of the program, including during extracurricular and sports activities, even after all symptoms have ended.
 - From day 6-10, individuals who return from isolation should avoid being around other people who are at higher risk for severe illness.
 - During times when masks cannot be worn, such as during meals, snacks, and naptime, children who are returning from isolation will be distanced (6 ft.) while staff still safely maintain proper supervision.
- **If a child cannot correctly and consistently wear a well-fitting mask around others (e.g., children younger than two, children who have mask accommodations, etc.), they should stay in isolation through day 10.**

Quarantine is no longer required for exposed staff or children based on DOH guidelines.

Childcare Closure in Response to COVID-19 Cases:

There may be instances where closure of a classroom or program is warranted to stop transmission of COVID-19. The time period on such closures can vary, from initial short-term closures to allow time for local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation and help our program determine appropriate next steps, to extended closures to stop transmission of COVID-19. As needed childcare, early learning, and day camp programs will work with Public Health Seattle/King County to determine when it is necessary to close a classroom or program and when the classroom or program can reopen.

We will consider the following to determine when to close a classroom:

- The classroom/group/cohort experiences a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases.

- There is evidence of transmission of COVID-19 in the classroom/group/cohort.
- The classroom/group/cohort cannot function due to insufficient staff.

A COVID-19 outbreak in a childcare program is considered when the following have been met:

- There are COVID-19 cases among 5 staff or students, or 20% of staff or students.
- The cases have a symptom onset or positive test result within a 7-day period of each other.
- The cases are epidemiologically linked.
- The cases do not share a household.
- The cases are not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting during the investigation.