



Responding to COVID in Licensed Child Care Facilities

This is advice from the Division of Public Health (DPH). This does not constitute legal advice.

How should licensed child care facilities prepare to respond to positive COVID cases?

In developing their plans, licensed child care facilities should identify a COVID-19 facility Coordinator. Ideally, the Coordinator would be the licensee or center administrator. The facility Coordinator will work with an epidemiologist from DPH to support case investigation and contact tracing, which includes assessing each unique situation and determining if other children or staff should be quarantined or tested.

If a positive case occurs, the following process should be followed:

- The COVID Coordinator will contact the Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology within DPH at 1-888-295-5156 and report the case. If DPH learns of the child care facility's positive case first, DPH will contact the facility Coordinator.
- DPH would then assign an epidemiologist to perform the investigation.

How should the licensed child care facility expect to find out that a child or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19?

Cases in licensed child care facilities will trigger a priority response from DPH to the child care, and DPH will contact the COVID Coordinator within 24 hours of receiving notification of a positive result. DPH will identify the COVID-positive staff member or child and work with the COVID Coordinator and the positive individual to identify any close contacts that need to be quarantined. The COVID Coordinator may only disclose the name of the positive individual if needed for the purposes of assisting with contact tracing. For instance, if a young child tests positive, the COVID Coordinator may need a staff member's assistance in identifying the child's close contacts in the facility. This disclosure should be extremely limited in nature. In any case, the COVID Coordinator should not disclose the name of a staff member or child who is positive to children or parents. In addition, child care facilities should also request that parents and staff contact the facility if they learn they – or their children – test positive since this can expedite the implementation of appropriate infectious control actions. If the child care facility learns of the case before hearing from DPH, it should contact the Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology within DPH at 1-888-295-5156.



What happens once DPH learns that a child or staff member tests positive for COVID?

Positive cases related to a child care setting are considered high-priority cases for DPH, and if they are identified through initial case investigation or contact tracing, a DPH epidemiologist will begin a detailed investigation. Likewise, if the child care facility notifies DPH of a positive case, DPH will assign a DPH epidemiologist to the case. The person who tested positive will be instructed to self-isolate for a time period that depends on when he/she developed symptoms or had the test done. A person who tests positive will be instructed to stay in touch with DPH. DPH will issue an email to the individual (or a parent/guardian for a child) when the individual has been released from DPH monitoring. Only medical providers can provide a 'return to work/child care' document. Licensed child care facilities should require individuals to share either of these documents with the COVID-19 facility Coordinator before allowing someone who tested positive to return to the facility.

Only close contacts of the person who tested positive will be required to quarantine. For example:

- If a staff member tests positive but has consistently worn a mask and was not closer than 6 feet for more than 15 consecutive minutes to any of his or her children, then the children **do not need** to quarantine.
- If a child tests positive and played together or sat at a desk, table, or on the rug less than six feet apart from another child for more than 15 minutes and did not wear a mask, the child(ren) next to the positive case **does** need to quarantine.
- For K-12 remote learning students in care, if a student who tested positive played or sat at least three feet apart from another student for more than 15 minutes but was wearing a mask the whole time, the student(s) next to the positive case would **not need** to quarantine.
- We understand that there will be scenarios where, due to the nature of child care facilities activities, staff may be uncertain about whether these protocols were followed. The COVID facility Coordinator should always work with the assigned DPH epidemiologist, who will help them make a determination on whether quarantine is necessary based on available information. If adherence to protocols cannot be determined, the individual will likely need to quarantine.

Also, close contacts of close contacts may not need to quarantine. For instance, a sibling in the household of a positive case should be considered a close contact and should quarantine and be tested. Close contacts of the sibling (e.g., other children in the same classroom as the sibling) do not need to quarantine while the sibling's test results are pending, but they should be monitored for symptoms. If the sibling's results are negative, they will not need to quarantine. If the sibling's results are positive, they will need to contact DPH, and the close contacts to this positive sibling will need to quarantine.

A DPH epidemiologist will assist a child care in running through the above scenarios.



What is the testing protocol for close contacts of positive cases?

The DPH epidemiologist will advise close contacts if and when they should be tested due to potential exposure. DPH will make staff and children who may have been exposed aware of available testing opportunities. All Delawareans are encouraged to get tested at community testing sites, whether or not they're symptomatic or have been exposed to the virus. If there is evidence of potential widespread transmission of the disease at the facility (e.g., two or more cases from different households potentially transmitted at the child care), DPH may work with the facility to perform widespread testing. This decision should be based on findings from an investigation by DPH and informed by current levels of community infection.

Are parents notified about a positive test in the child care facility?

The child care facility will coordinate with the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and DPH to notify families of the presence of any positive COVID-19 cases in the classroom and/or facility to raise awareness and encourage closer observation for any symptoms at home. Current DELACARE Regulations require child care providers to inform parents/guardians when their child has been exposed to a contagious disease or condition. Previously established processes for communication to stakeholders regarding other contagious diseases that impact child care facilities should be followed, including protecting the identity of those who test positive.

Are there special cleaning protocols licensed child care facilities must follow after a positive case?

If a positive case is connected to an individual office or other space that can be left vacant for up to 24 hours, this is best and will allow the viral load to reduce before cleaning and disinfection take place. If the positive case is associated with a classroom or other essential space, regular disinfection and cleaning should take place before the next business day. If enhanced cleaning has been taking place, then those procedures should be continued, and additional or specific cleaning should not be necessary. Enhanced cleaning will reduce risk and should be continued. Commonly touched surfaces (door knobs, railings, etc.) should be cleaned every 15 minutes to 2 hours. It is vital that an EPA-approved disinfectant, or prepared bleach solution, be used to ensure effectiveness against COVID-19.