

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

Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow):

2/20/2021: Clarified that vaccinated individuals who are a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case and meet specific criteria outlined in the exposure management plan are not required to quarantine.

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.

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:** The ECE setting must follow DPH guidance on [Decision Pathways](#) for persons who screen positive for symptoms prior to school entry or while at school and their contacts at school.

Exposure Management for 1 COVID-19 Case at the ECE Site

- ☐ **Required:** After identifying 1 confirmed COVID-19 case (child or employee), ECE Provider instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covid-isolation). NOTE: a confirmed COVID-19 case is an individual who has a positive COVID-19 test.
- ☐ **Required:** ECE Provider informs the case that DPH will contact the case directly through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health

Officer Order for Case Isolation.

- ❑ **Required:** ECE Center COVID-19 Liaison must notify DPH of (1) employees and children with confirmed COVID-19 who were on site at any point within the 14 days prior to the illness onset date and (2) persons on site who were exposed to the infected person during the infectious period. 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 the time, they are no longer required to be isolated (i.e., no fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of medicine that reduce fevers AND other 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. 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:
 - Being within 6 feet of the infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period;
 - Having had unprotected contact with the infected person's body fluids and/or secretions of a person with confirmed COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing utensils or saliva, or providing care without using appropriate protective equipment). Being present in the same cohort or classroom as an infected person.
 - Secure online reporting is the preferred method for notifying DPH of COVID-19 exposures 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:** Children and employees that are identified to have had an exposure to the case at the site are notified by the ECE Provider through a letter or other communication strategies. An Exposure Notification letter template is available at: [COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings](#). The notification of exposure should include the following messages:
 - Employees and children with an exposure to the case should test for COVID-19, whether or not they have symptoms, and inform the ECE Provider of test results. This will determine the extent of disease spread at the ECE site and serve as a basis for further control measures. Testing resources include: Employee Health Services or Occupational Health Services, Personal Healthcare Providers, Community Testing Locations: covid19.lacounty.gov/testing. Individuals who need assistance finding a medical provider can call the LA County Information line 2-1-1, which is available 24/7.
 - Exposed students and employees should self-quarantine (stay in their home or another residence, separate from others) and monitor for symptoms for 10 days from their last contact with the case while infectious (as defined above), even if they receive a negative test result during their quarantine period. If they remain asymptomatic, they are released from quarantine after Day 10 but must continue to monitor their health and strictly adhere to COVID-19 prevention precautions through Day 14. Note: a person who tests negative may subsequently develop disease, with or without symptoms, if tested during the incubation period (i.e., time period between exposure and disease onset). Home Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 is available at: ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine.

- NOTE: Vaccinated persons who are a close contact to a confirmed case are not required to quarantine and test for COVID-19 if they meet all of the following criteria: (1) are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine) and (2) are within 3 months following receipt of the last dose in the series and (3) have remained asymptomatic since last contact with the infected person.
 - DPH will contact exposed employees and children who meet the quarantine requirement through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Quarantine.
- ☐ *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 Education Settings](#).

Exposure Management for 2 COVID-19 Cases at ECE Site within a 14-day Period

- ☐ *Required:* After identifying 2 confirmed cases (children and/or employees) within a 14-day period, ECE Provider follows the *required* steps for 1 confirmed case.
- ☐ *Recommended:* ECE Provider determines 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.*

**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 do not exist, the ECE Provider continues with routine exposure management.
- If epidemiological links exist, the ECE Provider reinforces messages to children, parents/caregivers/guardians, and employees on precautions to take to prevent spread at the setting, including implementation of site-specific interventions.

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 among children and/or employees 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/lacdph.educationsector.covidreport>. If online report-

ing 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](mailto: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 at the ECE site with symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 within a 14-day period in a group* with members who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a household, and are not a close contact of each other outside the campus. **Groups include persons that share common membership (e.g., same classroom, ECE event, or ECE extracurricular activity).*
 - If outbreak criteria are not met, the ECE Provider continues with routine exposure management.
 - If outbreak criteria are met, a DPH Outbreak Investigation is activated.
 - A public health investigator is assigned to coordinate with the ECE Provider on outbreak management for the duration of the outbreak investigation.

Appendix A: Steps for Managing Exposures to COVID-19 Cases at an ECE Site

1 Case	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions.2) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider informs the case that DPH will contact the case directly to collect additional information and issue Health Officer Order for Isolation.3) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider works with case to identify ECE center contacts.4) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider notifies* ECE center contacts of exposure and instructs them to quarantine at home (b) and test for COVID-19. NOTE: Vaccinated persons who have an exposure but meet specific criteria outlined in the Exposure Management Plan are not required to quarantine and test for COVID-19.5) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider informs ECE center contacts that DPH will follow up to collect additional information and issue Health Officer Order for Quarantine.6) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider submits a report to DPH within 1 business day with information on the confirmed case and persons who were exposed to the case at the site.7) <i>Recommended:</i> ECE Provider sends a general notification* to inform the ECE center of the site exposure and precautions being taken to prevent spread. <p>*Templates for contact notification and general notification are available at: COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings.</p>
2 Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <i>Required:</i> Follow required steps for 1 confirmed case.2) <i>Recommended:</i> 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.
3+ Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <i>Required:</i> If a cluster of 3 or more cases occurred within 14 days of each other, ECE Provider immediately notifies DPH.2) <i>Required:</i> DPH determines if the outbreak criteria have been met. If outbreak criteria are met, a DPH outbreak investigation is activated, and a public health investigator will contact the ECE site to coordinate the outbreak investigation.