



Commonwealth Guidance for COVID-19 Symptom Management in Education Settings

EEC **strongly** encourages child care programs to leverage [DESE's Protocols](#) as a guide/foundation when updating their own illness policies and protocols for COVID-19 recovery. While there are distinct differences within the child care settings, consistency at the community-level will promote alignment for families with children who attend both child care and public school.

The **bolded COVID-19 symptoms** below (when they occur alone) should require immediate exclusion from care. The non-bolded symptoms should be managed on a case-by-case basis by the provider and family depending upon the severity, combination of symptoms and child illness policies of the program. Please reference slide 17 for recommended protocols on when the symptomatic individual (staff or child) should be allowed to return to the child care setting.

- **Fever (100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher,) child, or shaking chills**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Muscle aches or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, *when in combinations with other symptoms*
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Fatigue, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

EEC staff cannot provide public health guidance on COVID symptoms. All questions should be referred to public health or medical professionals.

Quarantine & Isolation for COVID-19



If individual is Symptomatic

- **Send the staff member home/excuse the child from the classroom and have them wait in the designated isolation room**
 - While symptomatic children wait in the isolation room, ensure they are provided with a mask if they are age 2 or older
- **Call the parent or guardian and arrange for the child to go home or administer a rapid test if proper parental consent is obtained**
- **Inform the staff to get tested and/or the parent to get their child tested with a COVID-19 test (antigen or PCR)**
 - Families can also contact their child's healthcare provider for further evaluation
 - If programs or families have access to an at-home, rapid antigen COVID-19 test, testing can be administered by the program and/or family
- **Clean, disinfect, and ventilate areas that the ill staff/child occupied**
- **If tested negative, the staff member/child can stay in childcare if symptoms are mild or return to child care once they have been fever free for 24 hours and symptoms improved, no closure recommended for exposed classroom(s), no quarantine recommended for close contacts.**

If an Individual Tests Positive for COVID-19 (Isolate)

- Individual should stay home for 5 days
- After 5 days
 - If they can mask: can go back to care on day 6 (test recommended, but not required)
 - If the individual cannot mask:
 - If individual can test on day 5 or later:
 - When test negative and asymptomatic or symptoms are subsiding: can go back to care the day after negative test, returning to care no later than day 11
 - When test positive, continue isolating until negative test and asymptomatic or symptoms subside through day 10, returning to care no later than day 11
 - If individual cannot test: stay home for a total of 10 days, returning to care on day 11

If an Individual Was Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)

- Individual should stay home for 5 days
- After 5 days
 - If they can mask: can go back to care on day 6 (test recommended, but not required)
 - If the individual cannot mask:
 - If individual can test on day 5, 6 and 7:
 - When test negative on those three consecutive days and asymptomatic or symptoms are subsiding: can go back to care day 6 provided they continue to test negative before care on day 6 and day 7.
 - When test positive, follow isolation guidance above
 - If individual cannot test: stay home for total of ten days, returning to care on day 11