

Mass Dept. Of Public Health -

COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for Children in Child Care, K-12, Out-of-School Time (OST) and Recreational Camp/Program Settings

Overview

Effective May 25, 2022, children in child care, K-12, out-of-school time (OST) and recreational camp settings should follow the below protocols.¹ Staff in child care and school settings should adhere to protocols previously issued by [EEC](#) or [DESE](#), depending on the setting.²

- A [rapid antigen test](#), such as a self-test, is preferred to a PCR test in most situations for the purposes of exiting isolation or quarantine.
- To count days for quarantine and isolation, Day 0 is the date of exposure for close contacts, and for positive cases is the first day of symptoms OR the day the day positive test was taken, whichever is earlier.
- Masking is never required in these settings while the individual is eating, drinking, sleeping, or outside.
- These settings are not required to conduct contact tracing as a standard practice, but must continue to work with their Local Board of Health in the case of outbreaks.
- While masks are not required in these settings, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID-19, should be supported in that choice.

Isolation and quarantine guidance and protocols

Guidance for Children in Child Care, K-12, OST, and Recreational Camp Settings:

- Quarantine for asymptomatic exposed children, regardless of where the exposure occurred, is no longer required for these settings. Children who are identified as close contacts may continue to attend programming as long as they remain asymptomatic. Those who can mask should do so until Day 10. A test on Days 2 and 5 is recommended, but not required.
- Children who test positive must isolate for at least 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever free for 24 hours, they may return to programming after Day 5, provided:
 - If the child is able to mask, they must do so through Day 10.
 - If the child is unable to mask, they must have a negative test on Day 5 or later in order to return to programming prior to day 11.
- Symptomatic children can remain in their school or program if they are tested immediately onsite, and that test is negative. Best practice would also include wearing a mask, if possible, until symptoms are fully resolved.

- If the symptomatic child cannot be tested immediately, they should be sent home and allowed to return to their program or school if they test negative, or they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their symptoms have resolved, or if a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis. A negative test is strongly recommended for return if the latter two conditions are met.

Note: At this time, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved or authorized any at-home rapid antigen test for use in children under 2 years of age. However, at-home rapid antigen tests may be used off-label in children under 2 years of age for purposes of post-exposure, isolation, and symptomatic testing. It is recommended that parents or guardians deciding to test children under 2 years of age administer the at-home rapid antigen test themselves.

COVID-19 symptoms

COVID-19 Symptoms for Child Care, K-12, OST, and Recreational Camps

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sore throat, <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i> • Nausea, vomiting, <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i> • Headache, <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i> • Fatigue, <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i> • Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies), <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i>
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