

Guidance for Child Care Administrators: What to Do When You Have a Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case in Your Facility

July 24, 2020

Public Health—Seattle & King County’s guidance reflects our commitment to protecting the health and safety of our residents in light of our local circumstances. You may find that there are differences in the guidance issued by local, state, and national entities.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, the number of King County cases continues to increase. If you become aware of a COVID-19 case in a child, staff member, or volunteer at your facility, **please notify the Public Health COVID-19 Call Center between 8:00 AM and 7:00 PM PST at 206-477-3977**. Identify yourself as a child care provider and you will be connected to a nurse consultant from the Seattle & King County Child Care Health Program. Advise anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or anyone who has had close contact for 15 minutes or more with someone who has the virus to get tested for COVID-19 by contacting their medical provider or going to a [free testing site](#).

Your partnership and many contributions to the COVID-19 response are enormously valued during this challenging time.

We have a suspected or confirmed¹ case of COVID-19 in our child care community. What should we do?

Make sure that any child or staff person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 stays home. A person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 **may return to child care when it has been:**

- 10 days since symptoms began or person tested positive
AND
- at least 24 hours since fever has resolved (without fever-reducing medication)
AND
- symptoms have improved

What do we do for staff and children who had close contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?

Inform all staff and families in your child care community who had close contact with the individual **while they were showing symptoms or in the 48 hours before symptoms began**. Provide a copy of the [COVID-19 Fact Sheet For Families](#).

¹A “suspected case” = a person who shows symptoms of COVID-19 but has not yet been tested or is waiting for test results.

A “confirmed case” = a person (with or without symptoms) who received a positive result from a COVID-19 laboratory test.

“Close contact” means being within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before they started showing symptoms (or, for individuals with no symptoms, 48 hours before the date the positive test was collected) until the time the infected person is isolated. Close contact also happens if someone with COVID-19 coughs on you, kisses you, shares utensils with you, or you have contact with their body fluids.

Ask staff and children who had close contact with the confirmed or suspected person to stay home away from others and watch for symptoms for 14 days from their last contact with that person.

- Examples of COVID-19 symptoms include: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever (100.4F or higher), chills, congestion or runny nose, headache, muscle or body aches, sore throat, fatigue, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of taste or smell, or other signs of new illness that are unrelated to a preexisting condition (such as seasonal allergies).
 - This list is not all possible symptoms. For the most updated COVID-19 symptoms list, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#).
- Advise anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 during this 14-day period to call their healthcare provider to get tested for COVID-19 or go to a [free testing site](#).
 - A negative test still requires the person to stay home for 14 days after the last contact with the infected individual. A negative test only means the person doesn't have COVID-19 at the time of testing, but they may test positive later within the 14-day window.
- **Families working in essential services (such as health care workers and first responders) who are able to keep their child at home and out of child care during this 14-day symptom watch period *without* affecting these vital services should do so. However:**
 - Public Health – Seattle & King County considers child care providers “critical infrastructure workers.” Child cares are allowed to continue serving families working in essential services (e.g. healthcare, janitorial, or grocery workers) who do not have this option, as long as the child remains well. The decision to stay open will be up to each child care facility.
 - Child care providers who care for children of essential workers **may** continue to work during the 14-day symptom watch period if they:
 - do not have symptoms AND
 - wear a cloth face covering at all times while working in the child care facility
- Advise families to not send their children to other child care facilities while recovering from illness or watching for symptoms.
- Advise staff to not work at other child care facilities while recovering from illness or watching for symptoms (see flow chart diagram [here](#).)

We have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in our facility AND we care for children of essential workers. We are considering staying open. What are our next steps?

See flow chart diagram [here](#).

Do we need to notify Public Health about COVID-19 cases in our facility?

YES! Please notify Public Health even if you have a single, mild case and, *especially if*:

- You see two or more children or staff (i.e. a cluster) with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection in your childcare, **OR**
- Staff, children, or volunteers become severely sick with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infections or undiagnosed respiratory illness (requiring hospitalization or causing death).

To notify Public Health, call the King County Novel Coronavirus Call Center 206-477-3977. Interpretation is available. Please identify yourself as a childcare provider.

What actions should we take during a closure?

Clean and Disinfect your facility

- Refer to the [CDC's Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#) for U.S. Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019.

Maintain communication with staff and families.

- Remind families to keep you updated on their health and well-being and to notify child care if anyone they live with develops symptoms.
- Include messages to address potential [stigma](#) and discrimination.
- Maintain confidentiality of children, students and staff members as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Continue to provide meal programs, when possible.

- Consider ways to distribute food to students.
- Do not distribute meals where people might gather in a group or crowd. Consider options such as "grab-and-go" bagged lunches or meal delivery. Find additional [meal resources](#) in King County.

Consider alternatives for providing essential medical and social services for students.

What steps do we need to take when re-opening the facility to children?

Continuously communicate. Advise all parents, children, staff, and volunteers about [steps everyone can take](#) to protect themselves and prevent further spread. These include staying home and away from the facility while sick; wearing a face covering that covers their mouth and nose when they are in a public place and cannot stay 6 feet away from others (including in child care); reducing non-essential activities in the community; frequent handwashing for 20 seconds; and avoiding sick people.

Refer to the [Checklist for Child Care Administrators: Steps to Prevent COVID-19](#)

- See section, "Education and Preparation"
 - Review [CDC guidelines, "Screen children upon arrival."](#) Decide which type of arrival health screening your child care program will implement.
 - Plan to maintain the same group of children and staff from day to day. Use a separate classroom or group for the children of health care workers, first responders, and other essential workers, if possible.
 - Print [Illness Logs](#) to help monitor absences or children who develop symptoms while in care.

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has ordered all people in Washington to wear a face covering in indoor public spaces and outdoors whenever they cannot stay 6 feet apart from others. [DOH](#) and the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) have issued specific guidance on how this requirement applies to staff and children in child cares.

- Staff and all children ages 5 years and older must wear a face covering unless medically directed not to.
- Children ages 2-4 are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering.
- Face coverings should NOT be put on babies and children under age two.

All staff and children should follow the [Keep Me Home If](#) illness guidelines during this COVID-19 pandemic.

- Ask parents/guardians to take their child’s temperature before coming to child care.
- Throughout the day:
 - Visually inspect children for signs of illness. These could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.
 - Perform routine environmental cleaning. Frequently clean, rinse, and sanitize or disinfect commonly touched surfaces (for example, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, and toys). Use the [3-step method](#).

How do I find a COVID-19 testing location nearby?

- For a list of locations that provide free COVID-19 testing, regardless of immigration or insurance status, visit: www.kingcounty.gov/covid/testing.
- Call Public Health’s COVID-19 hotline (206-477-3977) for help finding a testing site.
- For more information about what to do if you have confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or are worried that you may have COVID-19, visit www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/care.

These recommendations may be updated as the pandemic continues. Public Health appreciates your patience and partnership as we respond to the daily challenges that COVID-19 presents. For frequent updates on this emerging situation, visit: www.kingcounty.gov/covid and subscribe to our blog, the [Public Health Insider](#).