



## COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Programs

This guidance provides best practice considerations for child care programs to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among children and staff. These everyday preventive actions can help support healthy learning environments.

### COVID-19 Prevention Measures

#### **Get Vaccinated**

Children who attend child care are required to stay up to date on all required vaccines (see required vaccines at [bit.ly/school-vaccine-requirements](https://bit.ly/school-vaccine-requirements)). Vaccines are the best way to prevent getting and spreading illnesses, including COVID-19.

Encourage up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination for all eligible children and staff.

- “Up-to-date” means receiving all recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccine for which they are eligible. For more information, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html).
- Nonpublic facilities and programs may choose to establish policies for all children or staff to have up-to-date vaccinations to attend child care or work.

#### **Wear a Mask**

A mask can help protect the person who is wearing it and helps prevent people, including those without symptoms who do not know they are sick, from spreading the virus to others. Child care programs should establish “mask-positive” environments so those who wear a mask feel comfortable. Children age 2 and older and staff, regardless of vaccination status, **may choose to wear a mask** at all times or in specific circumstances. People may feel more comfortable wearing a mask, such as for personal health reasons or because they live with someone at higher risk for severe COVID-19.

#### **Stay Home If Sick**

Parents/caregivers, children and staff should stay home if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses and get tested for COVID-19.

#### **Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Latest Isolation Guidance**

The CDC has updated its COVID-19 isolation guidance to remove the recommendation that people with COVID-19 stay home (isolate) for at least five days. Instead, people with COVID-19

can stop isolating depending on their symptoms and while taking additional precautions, similar to other respiratory infections, such as flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

If parents/caregivers, children and staff have COVID-19 symptoms:

- They should get tested and separate from others right away. For more information about COVID-19 symptoms, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html).
- They should stay home until, for at least 24 hours, they have had no fever without taking fever-reducing medicine and their other symptoms are getting better.
- For five days after leaving isolation, they should follow the steps in the **Take Precautions to Avoid Getting Others Sick** section, below, to prevent spreading the virus to others.

If they test positive for COVID-19 but have no symptoms, they do not need to stay home but still need to follow the steps in the **Take Precautions to Avoid Getting Others Sick** section, below, to prevent spreading the virus to others. For more information about what to do when sick with COVID-19, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) and click [When You Are Sick](#).

### **Take Precautions to Avoid Getting Others Sick**

Parents/caregivers, children and staff with COVID-19 should follow these precautions when home sick with COVID-19 **and for five days after they return to school, work or other activities**, as they still may be able to spread the virus to others:

- Wear a well-fitting mask that covers both the nose and mouth whenever around other people.
- Continue to distance from others, especially people at higher risk of serious illness. This includes people age 65 and older, people who have a weakened immune system, and people who have underlying health conditions that increase their risk of serious illness.
- Take steps to improve ventilation, if possible, such as opening windows and using an exhaust fan, when indoors or around others.
- Cover coughs and sneezes, wash hands often, use hand sanitizer, and clean frequently touched surfaces.

If parents/caregivers, children and staff develop a fever or start to feel worse after they have resumed their regular activities, they should stay home and away from others again until, for at least 24 hours, their symptoms are improving overall, and they have not had a fever without taking fever-reducing medicine. Then they should take the other precautions for the next five days.

For more information, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus).

**The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.**

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