

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

**Recent Updates:** (Changes highlighted in yellow):

**12/28/20:**

- ECC Centers are required to notify DPH of all cases of COVID-19 among employees and children who had been at the site at any point within 14 days prior to becoming ill. Cases who were last at the site over 14 days prior to becoming ill do not need to be reported to DPH by the ECE Center.
- The definition of a close contact has been updated to include: (1) being within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period; (2) persons who were present in a cohort or classroom with an infected person during their infectious period.
- The required quarantine period for individuals who have been in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 has been shortened. Close contacts who remain asymptomatic may be released from quarantine after Day 10 but must continue to monitor their health and strictly adhere to COVID-19 prevention precautions through Day 14.

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 laboratory confirmed COVID-19 case (child or employee), ECE Provider instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 ([ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation)).
- 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 the Department of Public Health of all confirmed cases of COVID-19 disease among employees and children who had been at the Center at any point within 14 days prior to becoming ill and persons at the Center who were exposed. Reporting should be done via email by completing the [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector](#) and sending the completed line list to [ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov) within 1 business day of being notified of a case.
  - 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 to be infectious from 2 days before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.
  - A person is considered to have been exposed if they are one of the following:
    - An individual who was within 6 feet of the infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, even if a non-medical face covering was worn;
    - An individual who had unprotected contact with the infected person's body fluids and/or secretions of a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing utensils or saliva, or providing care without using appropriate protective equipment).

Persons who were present in a cohort or classroom with an infected person during their infectious period are considered a close contact at this time.

- 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](https://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](http://ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine).

- DPH will contact exposed employees and children 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 laboratory 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 to be 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. A tool is available to assist in the assessment of epidemiological links at: [COVID-19 Exposure Investigation Worksheet for the Education Sector](#). For technical assistance on how to assess for epidemiological links, please contact [ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov).
- 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 laboratory 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 the DPH Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) Education Sector Team within 1 business day by email at: [ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov) or by calling (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821.
  - Complete the *Line List for Cases and Contacts*, available at: [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector](#) and submit it to [ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov). For technical assistance on how to complete the line list contact [ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov).
  - The ACDC Education Sector Team will review the *Line List for Cases and Contacts* to determine whether the outbreak criteria have been met. The ACDC team will contact the ECE Provider within 1 business day to advise on next steps.
  - If outbreak criteria are not met, the ECE Provider continues with routine exposure management.
  - If outbreak criteria are met, the DPH Outbreak Management Branch (OMB) is activated.
  - An OMB public health investigator is assigned to coordinate with the ECE Provider on outbreak management for the duration of the outbreak investigation.
  - ECE Provider COVID-19 Liaison will submit requested information, including updates to the *Line List for Cases and Contacts* to the OMB Investigator until the outbreak is resolved.
- Recommended:* Prior to reporting the cluster to the DPH ACDC Education Sector Team, ECE Provider will determine whether at least 3 cases in the cluster have epidemiological links. A tool is available to assist in the assessment of epidemiological links at: [COVID-19 Exposure Investigation Worksheet for the Education Sector](#).

### COVID-19 Outbreak Criteria for Early Care and Education Sites

At least 3 laboratory-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). Epidemiological links require the infected persons to have been present at some point in the same setting during the same time period while infectious.*

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

<b>1 Case</b>	<p>1) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>3) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider works with case to identify ECE center contacts.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>6) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider submits information for <b>confirmed cases and persons who were exposed at the site</b> using the <a href="#">COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector</a> and sends to DPH at ACDC-<a href="mailto:Education@ph.lacounty.gov">Education@ph.lacounty.gov</a> <b>within 1 business day</b>.</p> <p>7) <i>Recommended:</i> ECE Provider sends general notification* to inform the wider ECE center of the site exposure and precautions being taken to prevent spread.</p> <p>*Templates for contact notification and general notification are available at: <a href="#">COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings</a>.</p>
<b>2 Cases</b>	<p>1) <i>Required:</i> Follow required steps for 1 confirmed case.</p> <p>2) <i>Recommended:</i> If the 2 cases occurred within 14 days of each other, ECE Provider determines whether the cases have epidemiological (epi) links exist. A <a href="#">COVID-19 Exposure Investigation Worksheet for the Education Sector</a> tool is available to help assess for epi links. If epi links <u>exist</u>: ECE sites implements additional infection control measures.</p>
<b>3+ Cases</b>	<p>1) <i>Required:</i> If a cluster of 3 or more cases occurred within 14 days of each other, ECE Provider <b>immediately</b> notifies DPH at: <a href="mailto:ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov">ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov</a>.</p> <p>2) <i>Recommended:</i> Prior to notifying DPH of the cluster, ECE Provider determines whether at least 3 cases have epi links.</p> <p><i>Required:</i> DPH requests that the <a href="#">COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector</a> be completed by the ECE Provider to determine if the outbreak criteria have been met. If outbreak criteria are <u>met</u>, DPH Outbreak Management Branch (OMB) is activated and an OMB investigator will contact the ECE site to coordinate the outbreak investigation.</p> <p>3) <i>Required:</i> ECE Provider provides updates to the OMB investigator until the outbreak is resolved.</p>