COVID-19 Exposure in Child Care Programs

This tip sheet will help programs make informed decisions about COVID-19 and minimize the risk of exposure to both the staff and the children in care. Please follow the steps below if a child or staff in your program tests positive for COVID-19.

Contact Arlington County Health Department to report the presence of **COVID-19** in your facility at 703-228-5200, option 1 and explain to operator that you are from a child care program, reporting a positive case, and provide a contact phone number. Your message will be forwarded to the designated contact person, who will return your call.

- When contacting the health department, please have the following information available:
  - The name(s) and contact information of the person who tested COVID-positive.
  - The onset date of symptoms and date the person was confirmed positive.
  - The total number and contact information of individuals (children and staff) who had direct contact with confirmed COVID-positive person.
- If you have any questions related to COVID-19, including what to do if you feel sick, information on testing and access to County resources, contact the COVID-19 Hotline at 703-228-7999, Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (Closed Saturdays, Sundays and holidays).
- Child care programs may email the Health Department at covidlocations@arlingtonva.us to send COVID-related questions. Personal identifiable information should not be included in the email.

Contact Arlington Child Care Services at childcarecentral@arlingtonva.us to report the presence of COVID-19 in your program. You may also complete a Child Care COVID reporting form online at: https://family.arlington.us/covid-reporting/.

Follow the steps below if a child or staff becomes sick or develops COVID-like symptoms while in your program:

☐ Immediately isolate the sick person and send them home as soon as possible.

☐ Close off areas used by the person who is sick.

☐ Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.

☐ Wait up to 24 hours or as long as possible before you clean or disinfect to allow respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting.

☐ Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas.

☐ If more than 7 days have passed since the person who is sick was present in the program, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

☐ Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if a student or staff member is confirmed positive for COVID-19?
Follow the steps above and immediately notify local health officials. The Health Department officials will help determine a course of action for the child care programs.

Children and staff may be dismissed from the premises depending on the situation. Child care programs should work with the local health officials to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

What should I do if a child or staff member in the program has been exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case?
Identified close contacts should be excluded from the center for 14 days of last contact with the case (quarantine for close contacts is 14 days regardless of a negative test during that time).
The child care center should consult with the local health department if they have questions about quarantining of close contacts. The local health department can assist with guidance in next steps.

The Virginia Department of Health has a helpful tool explaining the difference between isolation (for sick individuals) and quarantine (for those who are contacts of sick individuals:
https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2020/04/Home-IsolationQuarantine-Release-Graphic_FINAL.pdf

What should I do if a child or staff is has been tested for COVID-19 and is waiting on results?
Any person who has been tested for COVID-19 should be presumed positive. The person should NOT be allowed to return to the child care program until confirmation of negative results are received.

If the person receives confirmation of positive results, the child care program should immediately notify local health officials for guidance.

What should I do if a child or staff becomes sick?
If a person develops COVID-19 symptoms during the day at the facility and or tests positive for COVID-19, immediately isolate the person and send them home as soon as possible.

The Virginia Department of Health has a helpful tool to assist with decision-making/support:
https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2020/08/Evaluating-Symptoms-in-a-Child.pdf

If waiting for a child who is sick to be picked up from your child care program, have a staff member stay with the child in a place isolated from others and if possible, ventilated to outside air. If possible, allow for air flow throughout the room where the child is waiting by opening windows or doors to the outside. The staff member should remain as far away as safely possible from the child (preferably 6 feet or more) while maintaining sight and sound supervision. The staff member should continue wear a cloth face covering. The child should also wear a cloth face covering if possible (face coverings are not recommended for children under 2 years of age).

The ill person should immediately follow up with a health care provider for guidance. The health care provider will determine if COVID testing is required. The person may return to the child care program if the health care provider deems it safe to do so and symptoms are non-COVID related.

Should I close my program if there's been COVID-19 exposure in the program?

Any decision about program closure should be made in coordination with local health officials.

When should child care programs notify families?
Families should be notified only if the Health Department has confirmed with the child care program that someone in the program has a confirmed case of COVID-19.

A sample letter may be obtained from Child Care Services.