What to Do When Notified of a Lab-Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in Child Care Settings or Youth Programs

1/20/2021

Updates include a new link for reporting cases of COVID-19 among child care providers, staff or attendees and updates to the explanation of the information required for reporting.

A safe return to in-person program environments requires a culture of health and safety. One mitigation strategy alone will not eliminate the spread of COVID-19, but the thoughtful combination of multiple strategies may substantially reduce the risk of transmission and limit exposures when confirmed cases are identified. It is critical to engage and encourage everyone in the community to practice preventive behaviors.

Follow these instructions to help protect staff and children in your child care or youth program while you are waiting for the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to complete their case investigation and additional follow-up.

Key terms

Case: A person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Case investigation: The steps taken by a trained health worker when calling a person who tests positive for COVID-19 to ask about their symptoms, how they may have been infected, and who they may have infected.

Close contact/close contact exposure: A close contact is ANY person who lives with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 or who has spent a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period within about 6 feet of anyone who has COVID-19. However, even shorter periods of time or longer distances can result in spread of the virus. For example, a classroom of students who are together regularly could be considered close contacts, even if sitting 6 feet apart, because of the length of time spent together in a room doing many different activities. The case investigation staff will take into consideration types of activities and interactions, the setting, and other things, such as whether the person was actively coughing and/or sneezing.

Community spread: Community spread means that people in the community are infected with the virus and spreading it to others, who may not know how or where they got infected.
Contact tracing: Talking with people who are infected with COVID-19 to learn who had close contact with them and then telling close contacts they may have been infected. Contact tracing is a key element in stopping or limiting the spread of COVID-19. For more information on contact tracing at MDH, visit Contact Tracing COVID-19 [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/tracing.html].

Exposed: This means coming in contact with the virus. The virus is thought to spread when someone who is infected coughs, sneezes, or exhales. This is why people should stay at least 6 feet from each other.

Incubation period: This is the time from close contact with the virus to development of infection. For COVID-19, this period ranges from two to 14 days.

Infectious period: This is the period of time a person with COVID-19 can spread the virus to others. It includes the two days before a person has symptoms, and at least 10 days after symptoms start. For a person without symptoms, the infectious period is two days before the date the person tests positive for COVID-19 and at least 10 days after.

Isolation: Isolation is when a person who tests positive for COVID-19 stays at home and away from others, even those living in the same home. This prevents them from spreading the disease to others. The isolation period for COVID-19 is at least 10 days from start of symptoms (Day 0), or from the test date (Day 0) if the person has no symptoms, and until 24 hours without fever, without using medicine that reduces fever, and until symptoms have improved. The period could be longer if a person’s symptoms do not improve.

Quarantine: Quarantine is when a person who is a close contact of someone with COVID-19 stays at home and away from others for up to 14 days to see if they will develop COVID-19. This prevents someone who does not yet know if they have the disease from spreading it to others if it turns out they have it.

Transmission: This is the term used to describe when an illness spreads between people.

- Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Glossary of Terms [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/glossary.html]
- What to Do if You Have COVID-19 [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/case.pdf]
Information gathering and sharing

Child care and youth program staff may hear about a positive result from a staff member or parent/guardian before MDH is notified through our electronic lab reporting system.

Child care and youth programs are required to submit a report to the state of children or attendees, staff or child care providers who have received a positive test result for COVID-19.

Child care and youth programs do not need to submit a report for parents of a child in their care who have received a positive test result.

Please make a report to MDH of each child, youth, or staff member who receives a positive test result by completing this form: https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=KKWLDH3ARC.

This is a secure system to report information such as names, addresses, and phone numbers. MDH monitors this report system seven days a week.

Fill out the report as completely as possible but do submit the form even if you might not know all the information or if you are working with local public health, tribal health or licensing. Include the name and phone number of the person who tested positive for COVID-19. The submission form will ask for the following information:

- Contact information for the facility or program’s designated person.
- Facility or program name, address, city, ZIP code, phone, and type of program or child care.
  - For K – 12 schools and licensed or certified child care centers, the facility information will auto-populate once you start to enter it. Just confirm that the information that populates is correct.
- Whether the report involves a sport affiliated with a school, club or both.
  - If yes, then questions related to the sport involved will need to be completed (dates of practice and location, dates of games and location, name of opponent, were activities indoor/outdoor).
- Whether the location has had previous cases.
- The full name, date of birth and phone number of the person who tested positive for COVID-19 (please provide if you are able).
- Whether the case is a child/student/attendee, classroom teacher or staff member.
  - Type of staff (Administration, Bus driver, Custodian/Facilities, Nurse, Social worker, Paraprofessional, other).
  - Work location of the classroom teacher or staff member, if applicable (private office, shared office, classroom, other).
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- Classroom name/number/grade.
- Number of students and staff identified as close contacts.
- Did the case have symptoms and the symptom onset date (this is the date the case first started experiencing symptoms).
- Date the case was tested (this is the date the case had a test collected, NOT the date the test result came back).
- Whether the case worked or attended the school/child care/sports/camp while they were infectious.
  - A case is infectious 2 days prior to symptom onset and 10 days after their symptoms started. If a case has no symptoms, they are infectious 2 days prior to the date their test was collected and 10 days after the test date.
- At the time of symptom onset or test, was the case out on quarantine due to an exposure at home, school, sports.
- If applicable, the groups/agencies you have contacted about the person who tested positive for COVID-19.
- The type of follow-up you are requesting from MDH:
  - High priority: Need assistance with case/contact follow-up and tracing.
  - Medium priority: Would like MDH to contact me by phone or email to follow-up.
  - Low priority: Do not need any assistance at this time (follow-up/contact tracing/exclusions have been completed by school/reporter).

After MDH receives the COVID-19 Information Submission Form, MDH will reach out to you to discuss this situation based on the priority level identified in the report. Once you have submitted a report, your program can begin to work on identification of people who might be close contacts of the person who is positive for COVID-19. Child care and youth programs should ensure that they have up-to-date contact information for children/attendees (and their parents or guardians) and staff to conduct any necessary follow up.

- Gather and review the student or staff member’s activity. This review should look back two days prior to the date symptoms started or the date of the positive test if there are no symptoms. Consider:
  - Arrival and departure time (include all locations worked or attended).
  - Transportation used, if provided by the program.
  - Class or work schedule and rosters.
  - Lunchtime, outdoor play, and other activities.
  - The length of time the person was on site while potentially infectious
  - The classroom or program environment and the person’s activities (i.e., was the person in a cohort or class, or were the classes or groups intermixing).
▪ The person’s close contacts.

When MDH contacts your program to discuss your report, this information will be used to help determine any exposures (close contacts) that may have occurred in your program. If at any time during this process you have questions or concerns, please reach out to MDH at health.schoolcc.followup@state.mn.us.

**Consultation with MDH follow-up team**

Once you have connected with the MDH follow-up team, they will evaluate next steps and provide guidance. The evaluation will take into account the information available, with a focus on those who might be considered close contacts if the person was on-site during their infectious period.

Program recommendations depend on the extent of the exposure and what mitigation measures were in place within the program when the person who has COVID-19 was in attendance.

▪ Based on the details provided during the evaluation, MDH may recommend:
  ▪ Exclusion of close contacts, which involves requiring close contacts to stay home.
  ▪ Closing an entire classroom, child care, or youth program (e.g., an in-home child care where children and staff are consistently in close contact). This will depend on the extent of exposure and whether there is the possibility of ongoing transmission in the program. Any closure decisions should be made in consultation with the MDH follow-up team.
  ▪ A 14-day quarantine is still recommended for people who have been exposed to COVID-19. In some circumstances, a shortened quarantine period may be possible. The child care or youth program determines when it is appropriate to use a shortened quarantine period and must follow the guidance in these documents.
    ▪ [Close Contacts and Tracing: COVID-19](www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html)
    ▪ [Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19](www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf)
  ▪ No further action.

**Notifications**

▪ Child care and youth programs must notify all identified close contacts of their exposure to a person with confirmed COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with state and federal law.

▪ The MDH follow-up team will provide an exclusion letter and a fact sheet that the child care or youth program are required to give to all close contacts. The exclusion letter and fact sheet share instructions for close contacts, including what they need to do to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
Program may also wish to provide a general notification to families and staff who were not identified to be a close contact of the person. This letter, provided by MDH, provides general information about the situation and links to COVID-19 resources.

**Cleaning and disinfecting**

Considerations for cleaning and disinfecting your program’s facilities after notification of a confirmed case of COVID-19:

- Review cleaning guidance at [COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs](www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/clean.html).
- As long as routine cleaning and disinfecting have been done regularly, additional cleaning measures may not be necessary.
- Depending on when the person with COVID-19 was last on site, it may be difficult to know what areas they were in and what objects or surfaces they may have touched after they became sick.

**If a parent of a child is diagnosed with COVID-19**

- Child care and youth programs do not need to submit a report for parents of a child in their program who have received a positive test result.
- If the child lives with the parent who has confirmed COVID-19, the child will be considered a close contact and needs to be excluded from child care or youth program, and must stay at home for 14 days from the date of their last exposure to their parent. Children are at risk of getting COVID-19 during the entire time (at least 10 days) that the parent is at home in isolation. After this period when the parent is no longer at risk of giving the virus to others, their child or children must then stay home for another 14 days (quarantine), in case they get symptoms of COVID-19. This means children are out of programing for at least 24 days, unless they get sick or test positive for COVID-19. Even if the child is tested during the 14-day quarantine period and found to be negative, the child must complete the entire 14-day quarantine period.
- A positive parent of a child typically represents a minimal exposure risk within your setting, as long as the parent has not spent significant time within the setting (for example, beyond routine pick-up and drop-off) and the child quarantines as directed.
- Parents are unlikely to be close contacts of staff or other children in the child care or program setting if their time in the setting is limited.
- MDH does not require programs to send a general notification if a parent has confirmed COVID-19 of a child is diagnosed with COVID-19, but can provide a template letter, if requested. Contact [health.schoolcc.followup@state.mn.us](mailto:health.schoolcc.followup@state.mn.us).
Resources

- For information regarding a person who is symptomatic: COVID-19 Decision Tree for People in Schools, Youth, and Child Care Programs (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf)
- What to Do While You Wait for COVID-19 Test Result (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/waiting.pdf)
- Home Screening Tool for COVID-19 Symptoms (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/homescreen.pdf)
- More information on the importance of quarantine is available at CDC: When to Quarantine (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html).
- For video public service announcements, print materials, and translated documents to assist with preparing for and responding to COVID-19, visit Materials and Resources for COVID-19 Response (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/index.html).
- For general questions related to COVID-19, email health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us.