

Childcare Providers

Decision-Making Guide regarding COVID-19 exposures and Program Closure

# Introduction

The following guide is derived from the most up-to-date information relevant to childcare providers available on the CDC’s website and the website of the Georgia’s Department of Public Health. This guide was adapted for better relevancy to the specific needs and capabilities of the childcare programs in Athens. Citations and additional resources are provided.

## Definitions

**Close contact** – Is defined by the CDC as *“*someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic persons, 2 days prior to specimen collection) until the time the person is isolated”[[1]](#endnote-1)

**Potential exposure** – Is defined by the CDC as “a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic”[[2]](#endnote-2) or an asymptomatic person tested positive.

* A potentially exposed person (whether a close contact or household contact) should operate as though they are positive for COVID-19 until they can get tested for the virus and receive their test results back.

**Isolation** – The separation of those who are sick with a contagious disease from those who are not to avoid transmission[[3]](#endnote-3)

**Quarantine** – To separate and restrict movement of people who may have been exposed to a contagious disease, but do not show symptoms[[4]](#endnote-4)

If you have a question about a COVID-19 exposure in or related to your program, please contact the Epidemiology Unit of Georgia’s Northeast Health District (District 10) at: **(706) 583-2868**

If you cannot stay on the line until speaking to someone, be sure to leave a message and they will call you back.

For general questions regarding level of exposure, reporting to parents and staff, and proceeding or halting childcare programming, you may contact the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) for assistance: **(866) 782-4584**

# Confirmed person with COVID-19 in the building

If you learn about the positive case while the individual is in the building:[[5]](#endnote-5)

* Isolate the child in a designated room or zone until a caregiver can pick them up
* Isolate the teacher or staff member until their replacement can arrive

If an employee or parent calls you from home:

* Immediately determine the last day the employee worked or the last day the child or other COVID-positive person was at the center

If the Department of Public Health calls you:[[6]](#endnote-6)

* When an individual tests positive for COVID-19 at a doctor’s office or a testing site, DPH is notified. DPH may call you as part of the contact-tracing process to inform you that an employee or an individual who attends your program has tested positive, allowing you to then inform parents and staff about the COVID-positive case. However, it may take a few days for DPH to contact you.

## Assess Risk

* Determine which areas and rooms the person who is sick has had contact with during the 48 hours prior to them showing symptoms or testing positive
* Determine which children and staff the COVID-positive person may had **close contact**[[7]](#endnote-7) with (e.g., within 6 feet of distance for ≥ 15 minutes) over the last 48 hours.
	+ These individuals should quarantine (stay home and practice social distancing of at least 6 feet) for at least 14 days, self-monitor for symptoms[[8]](#endnote-8) (check temperature twice a day and watch for other symptoms), avoid any contact with people at higher risk for severe illness, and follow CDC guidance[[9]](#endnote-9) if symptoms develop.
	+ Please see the additional resources provided below

The following are cited directly from the CDC guidance for schools and childcare providers[[10]](#endnote-10)

* 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 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary – continue routine cleaning and scheduled “deep cleans/ disinfection”

## Short Building or Classroom Dismissal[[11]](#endnote-11)

* Call the Epidemiology Unit of Georgia’s Northeast Health District at 706-583-2868 for more information and guidance. You may need to call several times or wait for a call back.

# Additional Resources

**Isolating with COVID-19, quarantining due to exposure, finding testing, and returning to work:**

* Guidance from the Department of Public Health for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19: <https://dph.georgia.gov/isolation-contact>
	+ Includes information on when to discontinue home isolation if the individual had symptoms versus if they were asymptomatic. (See also the CDC’s guidance on discontinuing home isolation: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>)
* Quarantine guidance from the Department of Public Health for those who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19: <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact>
* Information on free testing provided by the Department of Public Health: <https://dph.georgia.gov/covidtesting>
* Guidance from the Department of Public Health regarding returning to work after a COVID-19 illness or exposure (download): <https://dph.georgia.gov/document/document/dph-covid-19-return-work-guidance-after-covid-19-illness-or-exposure-persons-not/download>
* For a printable poster from the CDC of COVID-19 symptoms: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms-24x36-en.pdf>

**Contact tracing:**

* For a brief video about the Georgia Department of Public Health’s contact tracing protocol and how it works, see their media campaign: <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact-tracing>
* For more detailed information from the CDC and a printable workflow about contact tracing: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>

**Information regarding childcare operations specifically:**

* For guidance from Georgia’s Department of Early Care and Learning specific to child care settings, see: <http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/COVID-19ChildCareProgramsChecklistGuidance6162020.pdf>
	+ Page 7 includes a printable daily health screening checklist
	+ Page 8 includes a printable sheet of information you can provide to parents
	+ Page 9 includes an operations checklist for providers
* For guidance from the CDC specific to child care settings (updated July 23, 2020), see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

**County-level data in Georgia for cases, deaths, hospitalizations, tests, and more:**

* UGA Professor of Public Health, Dr. Mark Ebell’s Georgia COVID-19 Tracker: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vS701zSLS\_VgpMUVSuGWI89Y05Yev3QCCF-l0nbwtSN1tE-hGlMV1T2Tg0GFVuiVD010szZ1ukr7vnM/pubhtml#](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vS701zSLS_VgpMUVSuGWI89Y05Yev3QCCF-l0nbwtSN1tE-hGlMV1T2Tg0GFVuiVD010szZ1ukr7vnM/pubhtml)

References

1. The Center for Disease Control (2020, May 29). Case investigation & contact tracing guidance: Appendix A, glossary of key terms. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Health Departments.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The Center for Disease Control (2020, Apr. 20). Implementing safety practices for critical infrastructure workers who may have had exposure to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Community, Work, & School.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The Center for Disease Control (2020, July 26). Isolate if you are sick: Separate yourself from other if you have COVID-19. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Your Health.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. The Center for Disease Control (2020, Aug. 3). When to quarantine: Stay home if you might have been exposed to COVID-19. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Your Health.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. The Center for Disease Control (2020, July 23). Guidance for child care programs that remain open. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Community, Work, & School.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#Resources> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Georgia Department of Public Health (*n.d.*). Contact tracing to stop the spread of COVID-19. <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact-tracing> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. The Center for Disease Control (2020, June 5). Public health guidance for community-related exposure. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Health Departments.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. The Center for Disease Control (2020, May 13). Symptoms of coronavirus. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Your Health.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. The Center for Disease Control (2020, May 8). What to do if you are sick. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Your Health*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. The Center for Disease Control (2020, July 23). Guidance for child care programs that remain open. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Community, Work, & School.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#Resources> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. The Center for Disease Control (2020, June 3). K-12 schools and child care programs: FAQs for administrators, teachers, and parents. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Community, Work, & School.* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)