

Positive COVID-19 Test Pandemic Day and Absent Day Guidance for Publicly Funded Child Care Programs

** This document was updated to provide revised guidance on when pandemic days can be requested. The effective date of these changes is December 11, 2020.*

Positive COVID-19 Test

If an administrator/provider, employee, child care staff, resident of a family child care home, or a child enrolled in the program tests positive for COVID-19, the program must:

- Notify the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) by the next business day in the Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQS) as a serious incident.
 - [How to enter a serious incident in OCLQS](#)
- Notify the [local health department](#) by the next business day.
- Ensure the person completes isolation or quarantine procedures for COVID-19 in coordination with the local health department or in compliance with guidelines from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), before returning to the program.
 - If the family child care provider or a resident of the home tests positive for COVID-19 or has had known contact in the previous 14 days with someone confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, care may not resume until the isolation or quarantine is complete.

It is recommended the program also:

- Work with the local health department to identify potentially infected or exposed individuals.
- Following testing, contact the local health department to initiate appropriate care and contact tracing.
- Notify parents by using the “Sample Parent Communication for Positive COVID-19 Test” under “Toolkit” at: <https://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/CoronavirusAndChildcare/>.

Pandemic Days are days the provider would normally provide care for currently enrolled children, but is not able to operate either the program or a classroom due to the COVID-19 pandemic based on one of the following:

- the ODH or local health department has required or recommended the program or a classroom close (or staff/children at the program quarantine or isolate) or
- the program or a classroom is closed in compliance with guidance from ODH or the CDC, or
- the family child care provider is required to close per Ohio Administrative Code.

Programs can request payment for up to 35 pandemic days per state fiscal year by sending an email with documentation from the health department of the advisory to close to

Child_care_adjustment@jfs.ohio.gov. Pandemic days are valued at 8 hours for each child with a full-time authorization and 5 hours for each child with a part-time or hourly authorization. *

Failure to provide documentation will result in the pandemic days not being paid.

Include in the email:

- The name and address of the program
- Program license number
- Phone number(s)
- Email address
- Description of the incident
- Supporting documentation (i.e. letter or email) of the advisory to close from the health department
- The planned closure dates for the program, for example, the program is closing from June 1 through June 15, 2020

Absent Days are days the child is authorized and scheduled to be in care but is not in attendance. Child care would have been provided had the child been present with the provider. Absent days are valued at 8 hours for each child with a full-time authorization and 5 hours for each child with a part-time or hourly authorization.

- Programs may continue to request payment for up to 20 absent days per child during each six-month period of January through June and July through December.
- If a child has been ordered to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, absent days may be used for that child.
- When a program has not completely closed but due to COVID-19 requirements has closed a room or rooms, the program may bill absent days for the children in the closed/quarantined rooms if the child was scheduled to be in attendance for the days the room is closed and the authorization has not been ended.

Frequently Asked Questions**1. Is a program eligible for pandemic days if it has supporting documentation from a local governing body, such as a city, township, or county, ordering it to close due to COVID-19?**

Yes, a program is eligible for pandemic days if it has documentation from a local governing body ordering the program to close due to COVID-19.

2. If a family child care provider (Type A or Type B) has been ordered to self-quarantine or isolate, is that enough verification that the family child care program is closing and is eligible for pandemic days?

Yes, if the family child care provider has supporting documentation (i.e. letter or email) stating they have been ordered to self-quarantine or isolate, they may request pandemic day payments for the children who remain authorized to the program. If the children are in need of care and have not been required to quarantine or isolate, then the authorizations can be moved to another program and the closed program cannot request pandemic day payments.

3. A family child care provider (Type A or Type B) has documentation from a hospital requiring them to self-quarantine or isolate. Is this acceptable supporting documentation to request pandemic day payments?

Yes, notification from a hospital is acceptable supporting documentation.

4. **A teacher was ordered to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure outside of the program. The program was not ordered to close, and no children are required to quarantine or isolate. The program closes the teacher's room until the teacher's quarantine ends. May the program bill for absent days or pandemic days for the PFCC children in this room?**

Pandemic days can be used when closure of a room or the program was a business decision, as long as the program is taking this action following the guidance of ODH and the CDC. Pandemic days used for a classroom will be deducted from the 35 permitted pandemic days. Absent days or pandemic days may be used for the children in the room as long as the authorizations remain. If the children are authorized to another program during the classroom closure, then absent/pandemic days cannot be billed.

5. **A child in the toddler room tested positive for COVID-19. The program closed that room as the other children and teacher in it are quarantined. The health department did not order or recommend the entire program close. The program made a business decision to shut down the entire program for two days to deep clean following the guidance of the ODH and CDC. Can absent days or pandemic days be used for the days the entire program was closed?**

As long as the program is following ODH and CDC guidance, then pandemic days can be requested.

6. **A program received written notice from the health department recommending that they close for two days and conduct a deep cleaning of the entire program. May the program request pandemic day payments?**

Yes, as the health department recommended that the program close, they may request pandemic day payment for the days they are closed.

7. **My local health department is currently unavailable. My program is following the guidelines in rule for quarantine and isolation from the ODH and the CDC which resulted in closing my program for a period of time. Can my program request pandemic days for the days we are closed even though I don't have documentation from the local health department?**

Yes. If the program is unsuccessful, then a request can be submitted to ODJFS. In addition to the items indicated above, the program must include:

- A copy of the serious incident report notifying ODJFS of a positive case.
- A statement confirming program closure following the CDC and ODH guidelines.

8. **My program has already received payment for 21 pandemic days. Do we get 35 more days based on the increase in pandemic days in the new rules?**

Programs are able to request a total of 35 pandemic days each fiscal year. The rule change gives programs an additional 14 days. If your program has already received 21 pandemic days, an additional 14 pandemic days will be available on or after December 11, 2020 for days the program is closed due to COVID-19.

9. Can pandemic days be requested for private pay families?

No, the pandemic days and absent days are a benefit of the publicly funded child care program.

10. If I close a classroom and request pandemic days for those children, do those pandemic days count against the 35 pandemic days for the whole program?

Yes, when pandemic days are paid for specific children authorized for publicly funded child care, they are deducted from the 35 total days allowed in rule, regardless of whether they are used for a classroom or the whole program.

11. If school district closes or goes to full remote learning and the child care program is housed in the school, can I request pandemic days?

If the school is closing temporarily for cleaning or building quarantine following the guidance from the local health department or the ODH and CDC, then pandemic days can be requested. If the program is not planning on re-opening, then the program cannot request pandemic days. If the children are authorized to another program during the closure, then pandemic days cannot be billed.

12. Do programs still need to contact the health department to report a positive COVID-19 case in their programs?

Yes, per rule the program must report all positive cases in their program to their local health department.

13. If the county COVID level is purple and the program is ordered to close by local authorities, can the program request absent days?

Yes, the program can request pandemic days.