

Quarantine Guidance for Children Wearing Masks in Child Care

Child care rules require that when a child in a child care program tests positive for COVID-19 the program must follow isolation/quarantine guidelines from their local health department or in compliance with the Ohio Department of Health and CDC.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) issued the [COVID-19 Fact Sheet K-12 School Quarantine Guidelines](#) on January 5, 2021. This guidance is supported by recent studies and pilot evaluations which indicate that the “risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools may be limited with strict adherence to prevention measures in a monitored environment.”

The ODH guidelines also apply to child care classrooms where masks are worn. Children exposed to someone in a classroom environment or while on school transportation who has tested positive for COVID-19 may continue to attend the child care program if the following conditions are met:

1. The program has documented COVID-19 prevention policies
 - Policy should include universal mask wearing, social distancing, hand washing, identification and management of students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and routine and environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols
2. Masks worn must have covered noses and mouths
3. Social distancing practices have been maintained.
 - The CDC defines acceptable social distance as a minimum of 6 ft.
 - In accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics, desks should be placed ideally 6 ft apart and at a minimum 3 ft apart.
 - When masks are removed for eating, a distance of 6 ft or greater must have been maintained.

For additional information about COVID-19 prevention policies, please see: [CDC Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **My program only serves school-age children. I follow the licensing rules that include mask wearing, handwashing, identification and management of students exhibiting symptoms, as well as routine cleaning. I don't have all these items documented because they weren't required to be documented. Do the K-12 guidelines for quarantine apply to my program?**

Yes, if you also practice social distancing which was not a licensing rule requirement, just a best practice, and you have a procedure in place to support the social distancing best practice.

2. **What if my program serves both school-age children and younger children? We have only required masks for school-age children and all staff (so not universal mask wearing). Do the K-12 guidelines for quarantine apply to my program? Depends.**

No, if the school-age children share a space with any younger children.

Yes, if the school-age children have their own space but only for the school age classroom.

Please be reminded that children two years and under may **not** wear face coverings.

3. **My program received a non-compliance for not wearing masks but are now following all mask requirements. Do the K-12 guidelines for quarantine apply to my program?**

Yes, the guidelines apply.

4. **Can my younger child who has close contact with individuals who tested positive continue to attend the child care program?**

If the exposure occurred in a child care classroom setting where full mitigation measures were in place (consistent wearing of face masks, maximized physical distancing, regular handwashing/sanitizing, regular disinfecting of surfaces, etc.) a child who is symptom free can continue to attend the program. If the exposure took place outside of a child care classroom setting (e.g. at home, in a community setting, etc.) the child is required to quarantine and may not attend the program.

5. **Do the K-12 guidelines apply when children share the same space for large motor play areas indoors?**

Yes.

6. **How does this apply to family child care homes?**

If the family child care home required masks, maintained social distancing, and has a procedure in place to support the social distancing practices for all children present within the group, then the K-12 guidelines for quarantine apply.

7. My program required masks for ages other than school-age children. Do the K-12 guidelines for quarantine apply to those age groups too?

The K-12 guidance for quarantines only applies where programs adhere fully to the required mitigation steps in a classroom setting. The requirements include:

- The program has documented COVID-19 prevention policies, including universal mask wearing, social distancing, hand-washing, identification and management of students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols.
- The exposure occurred **within a classroom environment** or while on required school transport (e.g., school bus).
- The person with COVID-19 and any associated contacts were wearing face masks that covered their nose and mouth at all times.
 - If meals were consumed, a distance of at least 6 feet between students must have been maintained.
- Social distancing was maintained.
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines acceptable distancing as a minimum of 6 feet. In accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics, desks should be placed ideally 6 feet apart and at a minimum 3 feet apart. This may be considered for school quarantine considerations (<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>).

8. We don't have desks but do have tables in our school-age room. The children are not always 3 feet apart throughout the day because they don't sit at the tables all day like in a school. Do the K-12 guidelines for quarantine apply to my program?

No, because the program doesn't maintain social distancing the entire day.

9. Do the new K-12 guidelines also apply to child care center employees?

Yes, the new K-12 guidelines also apply to child care center employees who wore their required masks and have maintained social distancing.

10. Do the new K-12 guidelines also apply to family child care employees and residents?

Yes, the new K-12 guidelines also apply to family child care employees and residents who wore their required masks and have maintained social distancing.

11. Is my program required to follow the symptom, isolation and discharge requirements in licensing rules?

Yes, all rule requirements regarding symptomatic children, employees, and family child care residents must continue to be followed.