



February 11, 2022

Dear Valued Child Care Providers,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated [guidance](#) for Early Care and Education (ECE) programs.

In response to the new guidance and in order to prioritize access to learning and care for children and families, Rhode Island has updated our guidance for children age 4 and younger in child care programs. The Child Care Outbreak and Response playbook will be updated to reflect these changes shortly.

### Highlights

In line with the CDC guidance, Rhode Island updated guidance to recommend **shortened isolation and quarantine periods for children age 2 and older if they can wear a well-fitting mask**. However, child care providers may choose to shorten isolation and quarantine for children younger than age 2.

Rhode Island continues to recommend shortened isolation and quarantine periods for school-aged children (age 5 and older), adults, and staff who are able to wear a well-fitting mask.

People who are immunocompromised should isolate and quarantine for at least 10 days and up to 20 days, and wear a well-fitting mask for 10 more days. They should consult their healthcare provider about when it's safe to be around others.

### Considerations for Child Care Providers

- Masks are required for staff and adults in child care settings and strongly recommended for children age 2 and older.
- Providers may choose to implement quarantine and isolation policies that are stricter than the RIDOH recommendations. These policies should be communicated in the child care's sick policy.
- Providers should continue to use layered COVID-19 prevention strategies to limit the spread and impact of COVID-19 on their child care communities. Child care programs serve a population that is largely unmasked and not yet eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Cases should still be reported to RIDOH via [ridoh.covidchildcare@health.ri.gov](mailto:ridoh.covidchildcare@health.ri.gov).
- RIDOH may provide additional recommendations if there's an outbreak.

Sincerely,

**The RIDOH COVID Child Care Unit**

## Updated Guidance for Isolation and Quarantine for Children Age 4 and Younger in Child Care

Find isolation and quarantine guidance for children age 5 and older, adults, and staff in child care programs in the [Appendix](#): Excerpt from RIDOH's Letter to Child Care Programs on January 13, 2022.

### Isolation

**Children age 2-4** (24 months – 4 years) who test positive for COVID-19 should **isolate for at least 5 full days** (ending on day 6) if they are asymptomatic or until they've been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and their symptoms have improved; and

- **Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 5 more days** when possible to minimize the risk of infecting others.
- They should get an antigen test on day 5 before ending isolation. If the result is positive, they should continue to isolate a full 10 days (ending on day 11).

**Children younger than age 2 (0-23 months)** who test positive COVID19 should either

- **Isolate for at least 10 full days** until they're asymptomatic or until they've been fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medication and their symptoms have improved. **This is the safest option** since they are unable to mask; or
- **Isolate for at least 5 full days** (ending on day 6) if they are asymptomatic or until they've been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and their symptoms have improved; and
  - They should get an antigen test on day 5 before ending isolation. If the result is positive, they should continue to isolate a full 10 days (ending on day 11).

**Children age 4 and younger who are immunocompromised might** need to isolate at home longer, from at least 10 days up to 20 days. Families/guardians should consult their healthcare provider about when it's safe for children to be around others.

### Quarantine

**Children age 4 and younger** who were in close contact with someone with COVID-19 should quarantine for **5 full days** (ending day 6), and wear a well-fitting mask for 5 more days if possible.

- They should get tested on day 5 with either an antigen or PCR before returning to child care.
- They are exempt from quarantine if they had confirmed COVID-19 in the past 90 days.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the quarantine guidance for children age 4 and younger who are household contacts and have ongoing exposure in their household to someone who is infected with COVID-19?**

They should quarantine for at least 10 full days (ending day 11). This includes at least 5 full days during the isolation period for the person with COVID-19 and 5 full days of quarantine after the last date of exposure.

For example, if a child age 2 tested positive for COVID-19 and has a sibling age 3 and both attend the same child care, then

- The child with COVID-19 could return to child care after isolating at least 5 full days (ending day 6); and
- The child who was exposed at home could return to child care after at least 10 full days of quarantine (ending on day 11).

### **What is the quarantine guidance for household contacts if a child with COVID-19 tests positive on an antigen test on day 5 of their isolation?**

Children age 4 and younger who are household contacts should quarantine at home at least 15 full days. This includes 10 full days during the isolation period for the person with COVID-19 in their household and 5 full days of quarantine (ending on day 16).

### **Can child care providers participate in Monitor to Stay quarantine program?**

Monitor to Stay quarantine program is only approved for school-aged children (age 5-17), including those at child care. However, school-aged children aren't eligible if they mix groups with children age 4 and younger. Find more information in the [appendix](#) with the excerpt from RIDOH's letter to child care programs on January 13, 2022.

### **Can pre-k programs that are licensed by DHS follow guidance for pre K-12 schools if affiliated with RIDE?**

No. All pre-K programs that are licensed by DHS and operated in a child care setting must follow DHS guidelines for child care programs.

## APPENDIX: Except from RIDOH Letter to Child Care Programs from January 13, 2022

**Child care staff and school-aged children (5 and older)** may follow the updated general public [guidance for quarantine and isolation](#):

- Isolation: People age 5 and older who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for 5 days, and wear a well-fitting mask for an additional 5 days. If they don't have symptoms or their symptoms are resolving and they're fever-free for 24 hours, they can leave isolation on day 6.
- Quarantine:
  - Staff and school-aged children (age 5 and older) who are identified as close contacts are **exempt from quarantine and should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days**, if they don't have symptoms, and they
    - Had COVID-19 within the past 90 days; or
    - Are [up-to-date](#) with COVID-19 vaccination.

\* If they develop symptoms, they should isolate at home and get tested.

- **Staff and school-aged children who are identified as close contacts and are not exempt should quarantine for at least 5 days and wear a well-fitting mask for 5 more days.** They should get tested on day 5. If they develop symptoms, they should stay home and get a test.
  - Child care providers may institute more stringent requirements in an effort to prevent COVID-19 transmission as long as it's reflected in the program's Parent/Family Agreement and adheres with CCAP Rules and Regulations (if serving families in CCAP).
- **School-aged children identified as close contacts who follow the Monitor to Stay quarantine program\*\* in a Pre K-12 school setting may also attend child care in person if they**
  - Are in a stable group at child care with other school-aged children only;
  - Conduct symptom screening and attest that they don't have symptoms for 5 days;
  - Follow quarantine guidance when outside school and child care; and
  - Remain diligent about wearing a well-fitting mask at all times for 10 days after their last exposure.

\* If they develop symptoms, they must isolate at home, get tested, and contact their healthcare provider for further recommendations.

**\*\* Important considerations for implementing Monitor to Stay quarantine program in child care programs**

- If school-aged children participate in child care in settings that mix with children age 0-4, then they cannot attend in person during their quarantine.
  - They must remain out of child care for the 5-day quarantine, returning on day 6 if asymptomatic, and wear a well-fitting mask for 5 more days.
- Providers may choose NOT to implement Monitor to Stay for programs with school-aged children.