

Summary Table for Returning to Preschool

Exclusion Category	Scenario	Criteria to Return to Preschool
Diagnosis	Child/staff person has tested positive with an antigen test but does not have or develop symptoms of COVID-19.	If the child/staff person takes a repeat PCR/molecular test performed in a laboratory within 48 hours of their positive antigen test, and that PCR/molecular test is negative: the positive antigen test can be considered a false positive and the person can immediately return to preschool; OR If the child/staff person does not take a repeat PCR/molecular test, or takes one within 48 hours and it is also positive, he/she can return to preschool when they complete 10 days of isolation. Isolation should begin starting from the date of their first positive test. The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to preschool.
Diagnosis	Child/staff person has tested positive with a PCR/molecular test but the person does not have and does not develop symptoms.	Child/staff person can return to preschool when he/she completes 10 days of isolation. Isolation should begin starting from the date of their first positive test.
Symptoms*	Child/staff person has symptoms of COVID-19 and has tested positive with an antigen test or PCR/molecular test.	Child/staff person can return to preschool when: - He/she completes 10 days of isolation. Isolation should begin starting from their first day of symptoms; AND - It has been at least 48 hours since the he/she had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to preschool.
Symptoms*	Child/staff person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has not been tested for COVID-19 nor has visited a health care provider. Therefore, the person who has symptoms is presumed positive.	Child/staff person can return to preschool when: - He/she completes 10 days of isolation. Isolation should begin starting from the first day of symptoms; AND - It has been at least 48 hours since he/she had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.
Symptoms*	Child/staff person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has received a negative PCR/molecular test for COVID-19 or has visited a health care provider and received an alternate diagnosis that would explain the symptoms of COVID-19.	Child/staff person can return to preschool when: - It has been at least 48 hours since he/she had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND - He/she has felt well for at least 48 hours. Note: The health care provider is not required to detail the specifics of the alternate diagnosis.
Exposure	Child/staff person who is not fully vaccinated has been in close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19. (Fully vaccinated persons and persons who have tested positive in the last 3 months and do not have any symptoms after a close contact do not need to quarantine.)	Person can return to preschool after completing up to 14 days of quarantine. The 14 days of quarantine begin after the last known close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual. Alternatively the person may complete a 10-day quarantine if the person is not presenting symptoms of COVID-19 after daily at-home monitoring, or they may complete 7 days of quarantine if they report no symptoms during daily at-home monitoring, and the individual has received results of a negative PCR/molecular test on a test taken no earlier than day 5 of quarantine. Follow the recommendations of your local public health department if someone at your preschool should quarantine. Local public health authorities make the final decisions about how long quarantine should last in the communities they serve, based on local conditions and needs. If quarantine is discontinued before day 14, the individual should continue to monitor symptoms and strictly adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice social distancing) through 14 days after the date of last exposure. Note: NCDHHS recommends that childcare not require an individual who is fully vaccinated (at least 2 weeks after getting their second dose in a 2-dose series or one-dose of a single-dose series) or tested positive for COVID-19 in the past three months to quarantine if they have had no symptoms after being a close contact to someone with COVID-19, and they do not live in a congregate setting (such as a shelter).

***Symptoms of COVID-19 are defined as any of the following:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fever of 100 Degrees or Higher - Chills - Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Cough - New Loss of Taste or Smell |
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In addition, the presence of the following symptoms suggests the person may need to be tested for COVID-19: Sore throat, congestion, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, severe headache.

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Household Member, Exposure	Child/staff person is a household member (e.g. a sibling) of someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19.	Child/staff person can return to preschool after completing up to 14 days of quarantine, unless otherwise directed by the local health department. The 14 days of quarantine begin either: - at the end of a 10-day isolation of the person with COVID-19 since that person may remain infectious for up to 10 days after symptom onset, OR - after the last known close contact with the COVID-19 positive person, in situations where the positive person isolates from all other household members.
Household Member, Symptoms*	Child/staff person is a household member (e.g. a sibling) of someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 but symptomatic person has not been tested for COVID-19, nor has visited a health care provider. Therefore, the person who has symptoms is presumed positive .	Child/staff person can return to preschool after completing up to 14 days of quarantine, unless otherwise directed by the local health department. The 14 days of quarantine begin either: - at the end of a 10-day isolation of the person who is presumed positive with COVID-19 since that person may remain infectious for up to 10 days after symptom onset. OR - after the last known close contact with the person who is presumed to be COVID-19 positive, in situations where the presumed positive person isolates from all other household members.
Household Member, Symptoms*	Child/staff person is a household member (e.g. a sibling) of someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 and has received a negative PCR/molecular test for COVID-19.	Child/staff person can return to preschool immediately, as long as he/she has not developed symptoms.
Household Member, Symptoms*	Child/staff person is a household member (e.g. a sibling) of someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 but symptomatic person has visited a health care provider and received an alternate diagnosis that would explain the symptoms, and the health care provider has determined COVID-19 testing is not needed.	Child/staff person can return to preschool when symptomatic household member receives their alternate diagnosis, as long as he/she has not developed symptoms. Note: The health care provider is not required to detail the specifics of the alternate diagnosis.

Congestion and Runny Noses

What does a runny nose mean?

Runny noses are common in preschoolers and can mean many things. A runny nose can be from an allergy, asthma, or other condition, or it can be a sign of an infectious illness like the common cold or COVID-19. Each child's health status and possible exposure to COVID-19 at home or in the community is unique. There is no single cause for a runny nose. Therefore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we will err on the side of caution.

Does a child with a runny nose need to stay home?

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, a child with a runny nose who was playful and able to participate would not have stayed home. Since a runny nose can be a symptom of COVID-19, children under 12 years of age cannot yet be vaccinated, and it can be difficult to manage a runny nose with a mask, a child with a runny nose may need to stay home to protect our unvaccinated children.

If a child has a clear runny nose that can easily be managed with a mask and the child feels well enough to play at school, they may attend school.

If a child has any discoloration or thick mucus with congestion, they must stay home and follow these guidelines:

- If the child has a negative COVID-19 test, and they are feeling well enough to participate, it is safe for them to attend preschool.
- If the child has a history of allergies, asthma, or other condition that may be causing the congestion/runny nose, the parent/guardian can provide a note with an alternate diagnosis from your child's health care provider. (Your child's health care provider may still recommend a COVID-19 test.) A child with an alternative diagnosis can attend preschool.
- If the child *does not* have an alternative diagnosis from their health care provider and *does not* have a recent negative COVID-19 test, they will need to stay home until their congestion clears. If additional symptoms develop, the child must remain home and follow the symptom protocol listed above.