

Alameda County Public Health Department COVID-19 Guidance: Health Screening at Programs for Children and Youth

This document was developed by the Alameda County Public Health department (ACPHD). This guidance will be updated as knowledge, spread of COVID-19, and availability of testing changes

Audience: Any Program for children and youth that screen their enrolled children and youth for COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival to the program

Background: Alameda County recommends that childcare programs, summer day camps, and other programs for children and youth check children for fever and other symptoms of COVID-19 each day before allowing children to enter into the program. The purpose of screening is to limit the spread of COVID-19 among children and program staff. This document lists the symptoms to ask about, defines what temperature is considered a fever, and sets out the conditions that must be met before a child can return to a program after symptoms of COVID-19.

A. Prepare for COVID-19 health screenings



- Check all children daily for COVID-19 symptoms. (More detail about symptoms in Section B below)
- Programs may choose to have parents take their child's temperature at home and inform the program of the temperature. Programs may allow parents to inform them by a paper form, email, using an on-line form, or using some other form of communication.
- If the child was previously absent due to illness or was sent home sick, ask them if they meet the required conditions to return to the program before starting the COVID-19 health check. (More detail about symptoms in Section D below)
- For more detailed guidance on safely checking temperatures, refer to [COVID-19 Screening Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#)

B. Symptom Check: What to Ask

The symptom check has two parts; 1) asking about symptoms, and 2) seeing if the child looks ill. A SAMPLE COVID-19 Health Screening Sheet for Children and Youth is included at the end of this document.

Programs may have parents answer the symptom questions by e-mail, an app, online-form, or other form of communication before the child arrives that day. All responses must be sent on the day that the child is attending. Programs should still do a visual check when the child arrives.

1) Ask Parents About Symptoms

Ask the parent or guardian the following:

In the last 24 hours, has your child had any of these symptoms, new or different from what they usually have or not explained by a pre-existing diagnosis?

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss or taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Seems sick or like they are starting to get sick



2) Visual check

- The visual check has no specific requirements. It allows a program to send a child home if the child looks ill when they arrive, even if the parent says the child has no symptoms. Look at the child or youth for signs of illness like cough, fatigue, extreme fussiness, or difficulty breathing.

If the parent or guardian answers “yes” to any symptom or the child looks ill, send the child home.

C. Temperature check: Definition of fever

When checking for fever at a program's entrance with a “non touch” thermometer, Alameda County defines a fever as a temperature of **100°F (37.8°C) or higher.**



If the parent did not check and report a temperature before the child arrives, the program should measure the child's temperature with a “non-touch” thermometer. For more detailed guidance on safely checking temperatures, refer to [COVID-19 Screening Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#).

If the child has a fever, as defined above, send them home.

D. Requirements for child return to a childcare, summer day camp or other program after symptoms of COVID-19

- **If the child is tested, and the COVID-19 test is positive**, the child may return after
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and
 - There have been at least 3 consecutive days with no fever, without taking medicines to lower a fever, like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) and
 - Respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath), if present, have been improving for at least 3 consecutive days



A note from a doctor or clinic is not needed. Please see the ACPHD Isolation and Quarantine FAQ and infographic below for more information:

<http://www.acphd.org/media/586935/acphd-covid-19-isolation-vs-quarantine-faq-english.pdf>

<http://www.acphd.org/media/587172/acphd-covid-19-when-to-self-release-from-isolation-english.pdf>

- **If the child is not tested and has no medical evaluation**, the child may return after
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and
 - There have been at least 3 consecutive days with no fever, without taking medicines to lower a fever, like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) and
 - Respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath), if present, have been improving for at least 3 consecutive days.

A note from a doctor or clinic is not needed. Please see the ACPHD Isolation and Quarantine FAQ and infographic below for more information:

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- **If the child is NOT tested but has medical evaluation**, the child can return before 10 days have passed IF
 - Symptoms have resolved AND
 - The medical evaluator (generally a doctor, Nurse Practitioner, or Certified Physician Assistant) provides a letter indicating that 1) an alternative diagnosis has been made, and 2) the symptoms are NOT due to COVID-19. For privacy reasons, the program is not allowed to require disclosure of the alternative diagnosis.



Note: Sometimes a child's symptoms are clearly due to another cause, such as strep throat or hand-foot-and-mouth disease. In this situation, the provider may clear a child to return to camp or childcare. This does not mean that the child does not have COVID-19. Many children with COVID-19 do not have any symptoms. It only means that a cause other than COVID-19 was found for the symptoms that kept the child out of the program.

- **If the child gets tested, and the COVID-19 test is negative**, they can return after
 - The child is feeling better. The symptoms do not have to be completely resolved and
 - There have been at least 3 consecutive days with no fever, without taking medicines to lower a fever, like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin).

The parent or guardian must show documentation of the child's negative test, for example, a copy of the test result or a message from the clinic or test site that the test was negative. This may be in electronic form. A separate doctor's note is not needed.

E. What to do when a child must be sent home



- Tell the parent or guardian that the child cannot attend the program that day.
- Instruct them to contact their regular doctor or clinic and consider a test for COVID-19.
- Give them the parent handout on COVID-19 health screens. The parent handout lists the conditions required for the child to return to the program and has instructions on how to get tested.
- Remind the parent that the child should stay at home until they meet conditions to return to the program

Frequently Asked Questions

What if this parent is unsure whether to answer "Yes" to the symptom question?

Ask the parent to focus on whether the symptom is NEW, DIFFERENT from their child's usual illness, or UNEXPLAINED. Encourage the parent to trust their intuition. Here is an example:

- The child has asthma. They often cough with exercise or allergies.
 - They have their usual cough --> NO, this is not new or different.
 - Their cough is worse than usual or sounds different than usual --> YES

What if a parent says they can't get a test for the child?

Ask families if they have tried the two options below:

- Families who do have a health care provider or have a plan, should contact their health care providers.
- For questions about testing and to see a list of known COVID-19 Testing Locations in Alameda County visit this link <http://www.acphd.org/media/571443/alameda-county-covid-testing.pdf>



SAMPLE COVID-19 Health Screening Sheet for Children and Youth

Before starting

- **Check if the child was absent or sent home because they were sick.** If they were, make sure they meet the conditions required to return to the program before you start the COVID-19 health screen

Step 1: Ask and look for symptoms

- **Ask the parent or guardian,** "In the last 24 hours, has your child had any of these symptoms that are new or different from what they usually have, and not explained by another reason?"

SYMPTOM	YES	NO
Fever or chills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cough	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muscle or body aches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Headache	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New loss of taste or smell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sore throat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Congestion or runny nose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nausea or vomiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look at the child. Do they look ill? Look for signs of illness like cough, fatigue, extreme fussiness, or difficulty breathing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child looks ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IF YES to any symptom or child looks ill → **SEND HOME (see instructions below)**
IF NO to all symptoms and child looks well → **GO TO STEP 2**

Step 2: Take the temperature

- Ask the child to come forward. Take their temperature. Keep your face behind the partition.

Temperature of **100°F (37.8°C) or higher.**
Yes/No



IF YES, temperature is 100.0°F or higher, SEND HOME (see instructions below).
IF NO, Say, "Thank you, your child can come in now." Tell the child, "Please wash your hands now."

Send Home

- Say, "I am sorry, your child cannot come today, your child may be sick. Please call your child's doctor or clinic and consider asking for a COVID-19 test. Here is information on when your child can come back to our program, and where your child can get tested."
- Give the parent a copy of "For Parents and Guardians: COVID-19 Health Screening at Childcares and Summer Day Camps."
- Document that the child was sent home because of fever or symptoms.

