Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

Colleen Chawla, Director
Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Director
Nicholas Moss, MD, Interim Health Officer

Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

COVID-19 Health Screening in Child Care Programs
September 16, 2020

This document was developed by the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) in alignment with guidance from the California Departments of Public Health, Social Services and Education. The document will be updated as knowledge, spread of COVID-19, and availability of testing changes.

Child Care programs **must** screen children for exposure to and symptoms of COVID-19 each day before allowing children to enter the program. The purpose of screening is to limit the spread of COVID-19 among children and program staff. This document 1) describes the screening process and 2) sets out the conditions that must be met before a child can return to a program after symptoms of COVID-19 (or a positive test).

A. Health Screening: What to Ask

The health screening has three parts: 1) asking about possible exposure to someone with COVID-19; 2) asking about symptoms and seeing if the child looks ill; and 3) checking temperature. A sample *COVID-19 Health Screening Sheet for Child Care Programs* is included at the end of this document.

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 screening.

1) Exposure Check

Ask the parent or guardian the following:

- Within the last 10 days, has your child been diagnosed with COVID-19 or had a test confirming they have the virus?
- Does your child *live in the same household* with someone who, within the last 14 days, has been in isolation for COVID-19 or had a test confirming they have the virus?
- Does your child live *in the same household* with someone who has had any of the symptoms of COVID-19 listed below within the past 14 days?

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

Colleen Chawla, Director
Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Director
Nicholas Moss, MD, Interim Health Officer

Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

- Has your child had *close contact with someone outside the household* who has been in isolation for COVID-19 or had a test confirming they have the virus within the last 14 days? Close contact means that your child was within 6 feet of a COVID+ person for 15 minutes or longer (including multiple shorter periods in the same day that add up to 15 minutes) EVEN IF both your child and the other person were wearing masks. Close contact can also mean that your child had a major exposure to the COVID+ person's respiratory droplets – for example, the sick person coughed directly on your child.

If the parent answers yes to one or more of these questions, send the child home.

2) **Symptom Check + Visual Check**

Ask the parent or guardian the following:

> In the last 24 hours, has your child had any of these symptoms, <u>new</u> or <u>different</u> from what they usually have or not explained by another reason (i.e. pre-existing diagnosis)?
> - Fever or chills
> - Cough
> - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
> - Fatigue
> - Muscle or body aches
> - Headache
> - New loss of taste or smell
> - Sore throat
> - Congestion or runny nose
> - Nausea or vomiting
> - Diarrhea
> - Seems sick or like they are starting to get sick

Perform a 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 for signs of illness like cough, fatigue, extreme fussiness, or difficulty breathing.

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

Colleen Chawla, Director
Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Director
Nicholas Moss, MD, Interim Health Officer

Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

If the parent or guardian answers "yes" to any symptom or the child looks ill, send the child home. If the child has one or more siblings in the program, they also need to be sent home.

3) **Temperature check**

> When checking for fever with a "non-touch" thermometer, Alameda County defines a fever as a temperature of **100°F (37.8°C) or higher.**

The program should measure the child's temperature with a "non-touch" thermometer. The screener should wear a mask and should EITHER wear a face shield OR keep their face behind a plexiglass partition. Temperatures below 96°F (35.6°C) should be rechecked to ensure the reading is accurate.

If the child has a fever, as defined above, send them home. If the child has one or more siblings in the program, they also need to be sent home.

Note: If a thermometer requiring a touch-method (e.g. under the tongue or on the forehead) is the only type available, it should only be used when a fever is suspected. These thermometers must be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use. The screener should 1) wear a new pair of disposable gloves for each temperature check with a touch thermometer; and 2) perform hand hygiene before putting on AND after removing and disposing of the gloves.

For more detailed guidance on safely checking temperatures, refer to COVID-19 Screening Guidance for Businesses and Organizations

B. Requirements to Return to a Child Care Program

For children who were excluded because of symptoms:

- If 1) the child's **COVID-19 test is positive** OR 2) 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 has been at least 24 hours with no fever, without taking medicines to lower a fever, like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin), AND
  - Other symptoms, such as cough or shortness of breath, are improving.

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

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

Colleen Chawla, Director
Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Director
Nicholas Moss, MD, Interim Health Officer

Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

- If a child is NOT tested but has a medical evaluation, the child can return before 10 days have passed if:

  o Symptoms have resolved, AND

  o A medical evaluator (generally a doctor, a nurse practitioner, or a 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 a childcare program. 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's **COVID-19 test is negative** and the parents or guardians want the child to return to childcare before 10 days have passed, the child can return if:

  o The child is feeling better (symptoms do not have to be completely resolved), AND

  o There have been at least 24 hours with no fever, without taking medicines to lower a fever, like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin), AND

  o A medical evaluator (generally a doctor, a nurse practitioner, or a certified physician assistant) provides a letter indicating that 1) the symptoms are NOT due to COVID-19, AND 2) the COVID-19 test was negative. Due to varying sensitivities of available tests, the letter is needed to verify the reliability of the COVID-19 test and to ensure that the symptoms have an explanation other than COVID-19. For privacy reasons, the program is not allowed to require disclosure of the alternative diagnosis.

For children without symptoms, who were excluded because of exposure to an actual or possible COVID-19 case:

  o If the child was excluded from a program **due to close contact with or household exposure to a COVID+ person or to a person with symptoms of COVID**, the child can return 14 days after the last household contact or close contact with that person. For more information, please see the ACPHD Isolation and Quarantine FAQ and infographic.

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

Colleen Chawla, Director
Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Director
Nicholas Moss, MD, Interim Health Officer

Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

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 if appropriate.

- 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 the conditions to return to the program.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if a 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 have a health care provider, or have an insurance plan/health coverage, should contact their provider or health plan.

- For questions about testing and to see a list of known COVID-19 testing locations in Alameda County, click here.

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

Colleen Chawla, Director
Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Director
Nicholas Moss, MD, Interim Health Officer

Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

Before starting

- **Check whether 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 about exposure

EXPOSURE	YES	NO
Within the last 10 days, has your child been diagnosed with COVID-19 or had a test confirming they have the virus?		
Does your child *live in the same household* with someone who has been in isolation for COVID-19 or had a test confirming they have the virus?		
Does your child live *in the same household* with someone who has had any of the symptoms of COVID-19 listed above within the past 14 days?		
Has your child had *close contact with someone outside the household* who has been in isolation for COVID-19 or had a test confirming they have the virus within the last 14 days? Close contact means that your child was within 6 feet of a COVID+ person for 15 minutes or longer (including multiple shorter periods that add up to 15 minutes) EVEN IF both your child and the other person were wearing masks.		

IF YES to any exposure → SEND HOME (see instructions below)
IF NO to all exposures → GO TO STEP 2.

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

Colleen Chawla, Director
Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Director
Nicholas Moss, MD, Interim Health Officer

Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

Step 2: Ask about and look for symptoms

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

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

IF YES to any symptom <u>or</u> child looks ill → *SEND HOME (see instructions below)*

IF NO to all symptoms and child looks well → *GO TO STEP 3.*

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

Colleen Chawla, Director
Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Director
Nicholas Moss, MD, Interim Health Officer

Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

Step 3: Take the temperature

- Ask the child to come forward. Take their temperature. *It is important to wear a mask as well as EITHER wear a face shield OR keep your face behind a plexiglass partition.*

Temperature 100.0°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 in Child Care Programs."*

- Document that the child was sent home because of exposure, symptoms, or fever.