COVID-19 RETESTING TIPS

My child just tested positive at school, but I want to get them retested because they don’t have any symptoms.

A positive test indicates a COVID-19 infection, and retesting is NOT recommended. Many people with COVID-19 test positive before they have symptoms, and some people with COVID-19 never have any symptoms at all.

I got my child retested, because I think the first test was a false positive. Their second test was negative, so I want to bring them back to school.

In general, retesting is NOT recommended.
- If both tests were PCR tests, the child is considered positive and should complete their isolation period.
- If the first test was an antigen test and the second was a PCR test, the school will need to consult with the public health department to determine next steps. A positive antigen test indicates a COVID-19 infection.

Why would two tests have different results?
The amount of virus in an infected person’s nose and throat can go up and down over time. Because of this, a test collected on two different days during COVID-19 infection may show different results. If specimens are collected using different techniques or if different labs are used, this can also cause different test results, even when infection is present. PCR and other molecular tests are more sensitive than antigen tests. This means they may detect infections that an antigen test may miss, especially in people without symptoms. False positive lab-based molecular test (e.g., PCR) results are unlikely.