

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Day Care Providers

Should the daycare close?

Each daycare set-up is unique, which makes it difficult to provide a “one size fits all” answer. Please refer to the daycare assessment tool, your DSS licensing specialist, or the South Dakota Department of Health for more information. Only the individuals who the Department of Health identify as a close contact need to be quarantined.

How do we determine who is a close contact to a positive individual?

A close contact is defined as anyone who was within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more per day starting the 2 days (48 hours) prior to the positive individual’s symptom onset.

How long should close contacts stay at home after an exposure?

Unvaccinated & Asymptomatic Individuals: SD-DOH and CDC recommends 10 days of quarantine from the day of last exposure to a person with COVID-19. Masking and monitoring for symptoms is recommended through the 14th day. Individuals may be able to shorten their quarantine by testing negative (can use an over-the-counter test) on or after day 5 from the date of their last exposure, provided they remain without symptoms. If the individual tests negative on or after day 5, they may resume normal activities on day 8, but should mask and monitor for symptoms through the 14th day.

Fully Vaccinated Individuals: Individuals without symptoms do not need to quarantine. It is recommended to be tested 3-5 days after last exposure (can use an over-the-counter test) and wear a mask in indoor public settings for 14 days or until a negative test result is received.

Individuals who have had a positive antibody test within the 90 days prior to exposure or immediately after and remain without symptoms, do not need to quarantine, but recommend wearing a mask and monitor for symptoms for 14 days. Individuals who have had COVID-19 illness within the 90 days prior to exposure, have recovered, and remain without symptoms, do not need to quarantine, but recommend wearing a mask and monitor for symptoms for 14 days

Can a staff member continue to work after an exposure?

Follow your facility policy. The Essential Critical Infrastructure Worker Guidance states that daycare employees named as close contacts may continue to work during quarantine, if they remain asymptomatic, monitor for signs and symptoms, and wear a mask during the quarantine period. For more information, please see:

<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>

If a child was positive in the past, can they attend daycare after an exposure?

If a child has had a documented positive test result for COVID-19 in the last 90 days, they do not need to complete another quarantine period provided they have recovered and remain without symptoms. The child must have been released from their isolation period prior to returning to daycare.

If a child has had a close contact outside of daycare (such as school or at home), can they still attend daycare?

No, children should remain at home during their quarantine period and should follow guidelines for close contacts.

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If a child is having symptoms similar to COVID-19, should we send them home?

The daycare should follow their routine illness policies. If the child does not get tested, the child should not return to daycare until they have been fever free (without fever reducing medications) for at least 24 hours and have shown symptom improvement. If the child has known exposure and is a close contact, it is recommended the child should follow quarantine guidelines.

If a child or staff member has been tested and is awaiting a test result, can they remain at daycare?

There are several different answers to this question depending upon the circumstances.

- If a child or staff member has NOT been named as a close contact to a positive case and is NOT having symptoms, but was tested for another reason, they may remain in the daycare. If they receive a positive test result, they should be sent home immediately.
- If a staff member has been named as a close contact and is NOT having symptoms, but was tested for another reason, they may remain in the daycare. They should follow guidelines set for essential workers including symptom monitoring and wearing a mask.
- Children who are named as a close contact should NOT attend daycare until they meet criteria to be released from quarantine.
- Children and staff members who are having symptoms like COVID-19 and are awaiting a test result should NOT attend daycare. If a negative test result is received, they should remain at home until they have been feverfree (without fever reducing medications) for at least 24 hours and have shown symptom improvement.

What should I do if a child or staff at daycare has tested positive?

1. Ensure the positive individual has been removed from daycare and does not return until after they have completed their isolation period.
2. Identify anyone who would have been in close contact with the positive individual. A close contact is defined as anyone who has been within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more per day with the positive case. This period starts the 2 days prior to the positive individual's symptom onset.
3. Close contacts individuals will be contacted by the Department of Health and instructed on the length of recommended quarantine as a close contact to a positive test case. Staff members may be deemed essential and remain at daycare if they are not having symptoms and wear a mask. Follow your facility policy.
4. Send a report to the South Dakota Department of Health (SD DOH). This can be done by emailing: DOHCOVIDDaycare@state.sd.us. Your report should include details on the positive case. DOH is also requesting assistance in gathering close contacts information. To report via the phone, call the COVID Helpline at 605-773-3048.
5. If you have questions, contact your DSS Licensing Representative or the COVID Helpline. If they are not able to answer your question, they will forward it to the SD DOH Daycare Team who will contact you for follow-up.

Will I receive a phone call from the South Dakota Department of Health (SD DOH)?

When a positive case is reported to the SD DOH, the individual (or parent/guardian) receives an email or text message containing a survey asking them to fill out information regarding the positive individual. This survey asks whether the child attends a daycare program and if yes, the last day that they were at the program. It is the responsibility of the positive individual (or parent/guardian) to report their attendance or employment at a daycare facility. If the parent or staff person indicates the child or staff person attended daycare while ill, the SD DOH will contact the affected facility to assist with contact tracing.

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If the positive individual reports that they were at the daycare during their infectious period (48 hours prior to symptom onset/test date), SD DOH will follow-up with the daycare. Due to privacy laws, if the positive individual was not at daycare during their infectious period, the daycare will not be notified

I am suspicious that a staff member or attendee has tested positive or has been in close contact with a positive case, yet continues to attend. What should I do?

Contact the individual (or parent/guardian) in question to speak to them about isolation and quarantine procedures recommended by SD DOH. Remind them about the guidelines and any additional policies or procedures the daycare may have regarding illnesses and infectious diseases. If you are unable to resolve this on your own, contact the DOH Call Center at 605-773-3048 to provide specific details regarding your concern and the individual. They will have a DOH staff member review the concern and provide appropriate follow-up with the individual (or parent/guardian).

I operate an in-home daycare. One of the individuals who lives in my home was named as a close contact to a positive case, can I remain open?

The individual who was exposed to the positive case, should not be in close contact with any of the daycare attendees. If this individual is the daycare provider, they may be deemed essential and could continue to work if they are asymptomatic and wear a mask.

I operate an in-home daycare. One of the individuals who lives in my home tested positive for COVID-19, can I remain open?

There are several possible answers for this question depending upon the circumstances:

1. If there is space for the positive individual to safely isolate away from the daycare space (i.e. in a bedroom away from the daycare, using a separate bathroom, in the basement, etc), then the daycare can remain open.
2. Does the positive individual have contact with the daycare attendees? If yes, the daycare attendees may be named as close contacts and may be subjected to a quarantine.
3. For household contacts to a positive case who also attend daycare (children), they should be placed on quarantine per CDC guidelines. Household contacts should not return to the daycare area until they have completed their quarantine period.
4. For household contacts to a positive case who are daycare staff, they may continue to provide services, if they are asymptomatic and wear a mask. This is in accordance with guidelines for essential workers.

I am a school-age program, can we follow the local school district policy regarding handling of COVID-19 cases and close contacts?

School age programs **may** implement the same guidelines and policies for handling positive COVID-19 cases and close contact cases as their local school district to allow for consistent processes between schools and school age care programs.