



# Early Care and Education Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. Why does Child Care have different guidance than K-12 schools?

CDPH has published guidance for K-12, in conjunction with the Dept of Education and Early Care Education (ECE) in conjunction with Child Care Licensing. As K-12 and ECE serve different populations and have different methods of instruction, different precautions are needed in the ECE setting.

## 2. Do child care staff who have been exposed to COVID-19 still need to be excluded from work if they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19?

No, fully vaccinated\* child care staff who have been exposed to COVID-19 do not need to be excluded from work as long as they are not experiencing symptoms. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommend that fully vaccinated individuals when exposed to a positive case:

- Test 5-7 days after last exposure, and
- Wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result, but do not need to quarantine. If test is positive or symptoms develop, the individual should isolate themselves from others, test for COVID-19 as soon as possible, and follow the [Home Isolation Instructions](#).
- Masks are still required in all childcare indoor settings regardless of vaccination status.

For more information, see:

- **CDC** – [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)
- **CDPH** – [COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)
- **Cal/OSHA** – [COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards Frequently Asked Questions Handout](#) (Outbreaks, #8 and #10)
- **County of San Diego** ([www.coronavirus-sd.com](http://www.coronavirus-sd.com))
  - [Health Officer Orders and Guidance](#) (Available in Multiple Languages)
    - [Isolation](#)
    - [Quarantine](#)
  - [COVID-19 Symptom Decision Tree](#)

## 3. A child care staff member who is fully vaccinated\* against COVID-19 was exposed to someone with the virus, and now has COVID-like symptoms. What should they do?

Vaccines provide strong protection against infection. However, a fully vaccinated person can still get COVID-19, although it is rare. If a fully vaccinated staff member has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, they should get tested 5-7 days after exposure. **If they develop symptoms**, they should self-isolate, contact their healthcare

\*Fully vaccinated = Two weeks have passed since receiving the final recommended dose of their respective COVID-19 vaccination series.

provider, get tested right away, and follow the [Home Isolation Instructions](#).

The [CDPH](#) recommends that all individuals with COVID-19 symptoms get tested. The CDPH says that staff who have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at work must be offered free testing during working hours.

#### **4. If a child care staff member is fully vaccinated\* against COVID-19 but tests positive for COVID-19, do they still need to self-isolate?**

Yes, a small percentage of people who are fully vaccinated\* can still get COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus. Regardless of someone's vaccination status, it is important that anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 self-isolate.

*Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 should follow the [Home Isolation Instructions](#), regardless of vaccination status.*

#### **5. If you are fully vaccinated\* against COVID-19, can you still carry and spread the virus?**

Yes, it is possible that some fully vaccinated people may have the virus and can spread it to others even if they are not showing symptoms. We are still learning about the potential to spread COVID-19 by people who have been vaccinated, which is why it is so important to continue to practice other protective measures (such as physical distancing, frequent handwashing, symptom monitoring, and using a face covering) even after getting vaccinated.

We must remember that our young children are not yet eligible for vaccination and cannot always properly participate in other precautions (physical distancing, effective hand hygiene, cough etiquette, and symptom monitoring). This is why it is important to encourage practicing all precautions, as much as we can. Multiple layers of protection make it less likely for COVID to spread, like a safety net!

For more information, see the [COVID-19 Updated Guidance: Childcare Programs and Providers](#).

#### **6. Can my child care staff member, who is fully vaccinated\* against COVID-19, work with multiple cohorts or classes?**

To reduce a child's potential exposure to the virus, it is best to limit the number of people with whom the children come into contact. Child care staff members should not work with multiple cohorts or classes as much as possible.

When working with groups of children:

- Keep the same group of children and teachers together
- Group children from the same family together when possible
- Avoid mixing children from different cohorts or classes together

By maintaining separation, you can decrease the spread of COVID-19 and make a full facility closure less likely if a positive case does occur.

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## 7. A child care staff member has developed some COVID-like symptoms the day after they received the vaccine. The staff member has not been exposed to COVID-19. Does the staff member need to self-isolate or quarantine?

People may experience side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. Side effect can include pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where they received the vaccine, as well as fever, chills, tiredness, headache, nausea, or muscle pain.

Any employee with symptoms should self-isolate. However, if they recently had the vaccine, they can end isolation as long as the signs and symptoms:

- Are mild in severity
- Occur within the first three days of vaccination (the day of vaccination and the following two days, with most symptoms occurring the day after getting vaccinated)
- Resolve within one to two days

However, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell are **NOT** considered normal post-vaccination symptoms. These symptoms would require exclusion from work, self-isolation, and getting tested based on the Child Care COVID-19 Decision Tree.

See the [COVID-19 Symptom Decision Tree](#) for more information.

## 8. Is it legal for a school or child care facility to mandate staff to get vaccinated against COVID-19?

Yes, employers can legally require their employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine, as long as they comply with the reasonable accommodation provisions of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). For more information and further legal guidance, visit the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Website—[What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#) (Question K.1; for examples of reasonable accommodations see Question K.2).

If your facility requires proof that a staff member has received a COVID-19 vaccine, it is recommended this information is documented in the same way as other immunizations are documented and maintained in the facility file. Proof of vaccination may include a hard copy or digital record of vaccine receipt. For more information, please see the California Department of Public Health's [Guidance for Child Care Providers and Programs](#) (COVID-19 Vaccines Section).

If you are considering requiring COVID-19 vaccines for your staff, it is recommended that you seek legal advice to ensure you are following all applicable laws and requirements.

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**9. Are we allowed to ask families (of enrolled children at facility or those considering enrollment) if they are vaccinated against COVID-19 or if they plan to get vaccinated?**

Because COVID-19 vaccines are not mandated for the public, you may ask families about their vaccination status, but you cannot require that they share that information with you.

**10. If staff in a child care classroom are fully vaccinated\* against COVID-19 but a child in the classroom tests positive for COVID-19, do we still need to close the classroom?**

If a staff member who is fully vaccinated against COVID-19 is exposed to COVID-19 in the classroom and does not have any symptoms (is asymptomatic), they do not need to quarantine or be excluded from work. The children in the classroom, however, who are not yet eligible to be vaccinated and were exposed to the child with COVID-19, are considered close contacts and would need to quarantine for 14 days\* from last day of exposure regardless of their COVID-19 test results. Therefore, it is possible that the classroom would need to be closed.

For more information, please see the [California Department of Industrial Relations' June 17, 2021, News Release](#).

**11. My unvaccinated child care staff member tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days and has recovered. Recently, they were exposed to COVID-19 again. Do they need to test, and do they need to quarantine?**

We are still learning about natural immunity after a COVID-19 infection. Re-infection appears to be uncommon during the first 90 days after a COVID-19 diagnosis or when symptoms first began. People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days and recovered do not need to quarantine, as long as they do not develop any new symptoms. People who are exposed to COVID-19 again and develop symptoms within this three-month period should self-isolate and contact their primary care provider to assess for possible re-infection.

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