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Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: June 28, 2023 **REVISED October 10, 2023**

TO: Providers of services to young children

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: Coronavirus Memo #50 **REVISED**
End of Public Health Emergency Declaration for COVID-19

October 10, 2023	Removed link to outdated weekly reporting form and reference to previous reporting process. Updated link to DPH Reportable Disease Form. Added information on access to Covid-19 tests. Updated FAQs.
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As you know, the Public Health Emergency Declaration in response to COVID-19 ended May 11, 2023. Child care providers should continue to incorporate respiratory health practices and the COVID-19 reporting requirements into their policies and procedures as part of their ongoing effort to manage all respiratory diseases.

The CT Department of Public Health (DPH) created an updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document (below) to advise child care providers. This resource provides links to the [CDC's most current COVID-19 guidance](#) where you will find Strategies for Everyday Operations in Schools and Child Care, information on [isolation](#) for those who test positive for COVID-19, and general guidance on health practices. The health practices needed to address COVID-19 also apply to any respiratory illness, including RSV or the flu, and are familiar to providers because they are informed by OEC child care licensing regulations and the guidance issued during the pandemic.

Providers should be aware that there is one requirement remaining related to COVID-19. As of July 1, 2023, programs don't need to report individual positive cases of COVID-19 on a weekly basis. Instead, COVID-19 outbreaks must be reported the same way as outbreaks of any other disease on the [reportable disease list](#).

Please be aware that the federal government is distributing at-home COVID-19 tests by US mail. Orders for four free tests per household may be placed at <https://www.covid.gov/tests>.

The OEC's webpages are re-configured to reflect the end of the emergency. We built a new section under Provider Resources called [Health & Safety](#). There you will find information on Air Quality and Ventilation, and other related health topics. The [COVID-19 section of our website](#) holds our archive of memos and information on COVID-19 related support programs.

Please continue to reference as needed the COVID-19 guidance found on the [CDC's main COVID-19 information page](#), the [information page for schools and child care](#), or reach out to your local health department with any questions or concerns.

Respiratory Viral Disease Guidance for the 2023–2024 School Year

FAQ's for Childcare Settings

As we begin the new school year, this FAQ document is being distributed to answer some of the questions the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) have received in the past several months, and to remind childcare providers of guidance that was issued at the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration. During the 2023–2024 school year, we are expecting the co-circulation of several viral respiratory diseases, including COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). People can take simple actions like staying home when you're sick, washing your hands, covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze, and wearing a high-quality mask when levels in your community are high, and staying up-to-date on COVID-19 and influenza vaccines—these are all the ways we can continue to protect ourselves.

1. Should childcare settings be continuing with increased cleaning and disinfection protocols at this time?

DPH continues to recommend that childcare settings engage in good universal cleaning practices, as would normally be expected to maintain a clean, safe, and healthy environment. At this time, enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices for the purposes of preventing COVID-19 transmission are not necessary for childcare settings. More information regarding good cleaning practices for childcare settings can be found on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/cleaning/facility.html>.

2. Do childcare providers need to continue with quarantine and isolation of students or staff who are exposed to a positive case or test positive themselves? Do we need to require masking for students or staff returning after isolation?

Childcare facilities are encouraged to develop their own policies to operationalize CDC guidance regarding quarantine, isolation, and masking at this time. People who are well can attend daycare and work, even if they have been exposed to a respiratory virus. DPH recommends that, as with any illness, students and staff should be encouraged to stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of an illness. Updated quarantine, isolation, and masking guidance from CDC can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html>

3. Do childcare providers need to continue reporting cases among students and staff? How should suspected outbreaks be reported?

During the 2023–24 school year individual cases of COVID-19 among staff and students do not need to be reported and the Daycare COVID-19 Submission Form is no longer active.

Any suspected or confirmed outbreak in a childcare setting is immediately reportable by telephone to both DPH (860-509-7994) and the local health department where the childcare

facility is located. Childcare facilities should continue to work closely with local public health to identify and investigate suspected outbreaks and implement mitigation strategies to limit disease transmission. https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/EEIP/Reportable-Disease-Forms/PD23_2023-12_27_2022-Final-Fillable-Form.pdf

4. Will COVID-19 home tests be available to childcare providers?

During the 2023—24 school year, COVID-19 test kits will not be distributed by DPH. COVID-19 home tests are available commercially. Schools that have test kits from last year or obtain test kits can check for changes in expiration dates here: [At-Home OTC COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests | FDA](#)

Childcare providers can still have tests available for students and their families; testing is especially useful for persons at increased risk for complications from COVID-19 and could benefit from antiviral medication. Persons who are sick, even if they test negative for COVID-19, should stay home from work and childcare settings.