**Return to Child Care Criteria**

**Note:** Criteria below represent requirements for the return to child care. These criteria apply regardless of an individual’s vaccination status or coronavirus (COVID-19) diagnosis history. Additional information is available from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)](https://www.cdc.gov).

In accordance with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education’s (OSSE’s) child care licensing regulations, facilities shall continue to enforce all requirements related to health, safety and communicable disease, including the removal of adults and children who are displaying symptoms or who have tested positive for COVID-19 (5A DCMR §§ 151.1 – 151.8, 162.4 and 118.4) and reporting individual incidents of confirmed COVID-19 within the facility to OSSE via the [Unusual Incident Report](https://www.osse.dc.gov) (5A DCMR § 128.3). Outbreaks of 25 or more cases of COVID-19 within the facility or tied to a facility-based activity shall be reported to the District of Columbia Department of Health (DC Health) via the [SalesForce application](https://salesforce.com). The scenarios in this resource are required per OSSE licensing regulations.

**Scenario 1: COVID-19 Symptoms**

1. **COVID-19 Symptoms**
   - Individual is tested
     - Note: The individual should not attend while awaiting test results
   - If positive: see Scenario 2A or 2B
   - If negative: see Scenario 3
   - If the individual is not tested
     - Meet COVID-19 symptom-based criteria to return
     - Submit documentation from a healthcare provider of an alternate diagnosis and meet standard criteria to return after illness

2. **Individual is younger than age 2 OR unable to wear a mask**
   - (1) At least 24 hours after the fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen) and other symptoms are improving;
   - AND
   - (2) After at least 10 days (i.e., on day 11) from when symptoms first started, whichever is later
   - Return to child care

3. **Individual is age 2 or older AND able to wear a mask**
   - (1) At least 24 hours after the fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms are improving;
   - AND
   - (2) After at least five days (i.e., on day 6) from when symptoms first started, whichever is later
   - (3) After ending isolation: wear a mask through day 10
Scenario 2A: Positive COVID-19 Test Result (Antigen or NAAT)³ with Symptoms

COVID-19 with Symptoms

Individual is age 2 or older

If still have a fever and/or other symptoms have not improved at day 5

If fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms are improving⁴

(1) After being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved⁴
AND
(2) After ending isolation:
• Wear a mask through day 10.
OR
• If the individual has access to antigen tests, they should consider using them. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, the individual may remove their mask sooner than day 10.⁵

Return to child care

Individual is younger than age 2

After at least 10 days (i.e., on day 11) from when symptoms first started

2B. Positive COVID-19 Test Result (Antigen or NAAT) and the Individual has Moderate Illness, Severe Illness, or a Weakened Immune System⁶

Moderate Illness, Severe Illness, or Individual has a Weakened Immune System

After at least 10 days (i.e., on day 11) from when symptoms first started.

Note: People who had severe illness or have a weakened immune system should consult with their doctor before ending isolation. Ending isolation without a viral test may not be an option for these individuals.

Return to child care
Scenario 2C: Positive COVID-19 Test Result (Antigen or NAAT) without Any Symptoms (Asymptomatic Infection)

COVID-19 without Any Symptoms

- Individual is age 2 or older
- Symptoms develop
  - Isolation restarts with day 0 as the day symptoms started. See Scenarios 2A and 2B for return criteria.

- Individual is younger than age 2
- Individual continues to have no symptoms
  - (1) After at least five days (i.e., on day 6) from positive test.
  - AND
  - (2) After ending isolation:
    - Wear a mask through day 10.
    - OR
    - If the individual has access to antigen tests, they should consider using them. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, the individual may remove their mask sooner than day 10.°

Return to child care

Scenario 3: Negative COVID-19 Test Result After Symptoms of COVID-19

- Negative COVID-19 Test Result (Antigen or NAAT) After Symptoms of COVID-19
- Meet standard criteria to return after illness²
- Return to child care

Endnotes

1 Individuals with pre-existing health conditions that present with specific COVID-19–like symptoms must not be excluded on the basis of those specific symptoms, if a healthcare provider has provided written or verbal documentation that those specific symptoms are not due to COVID-19.

2 Standard criteria to return after illness refers to the individual child care facility’s existing policies and protocols for an individual to return after illness.

3 A PCR test is a type of NAAT (Nucleic Acid Amplification Test).

4 Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

5 If the antigen test results are positive, the individual may still be infectious. They should continue wearing a mask and wait at least 48 hours before taking another test. Continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until they have two sequential negative results. This may mean they need to continue wearing a mask and testing beyond day 10.

6 “Moderate illness” means experiencing shortness of breath or having difficulty breathing. “Severe illness” means the individual was hospitalized.