

## Test to Stay Protocol

### Introduction:

When a person in an ECE program tests positive for COVID-19, ECE staff are instructed to identify close contacts and inform staff and families of children who may need to quarantine.

In current guidance, children and staff who come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 should quarantine if they have not had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days and are in one of the following groups:

- Infants and young children who are not eligible for vaccination (ages 0 to under 6 months of age)
- Staff and older children who are not fully vaccinated (two weeks after the last dose of the primary series when eligible) with COVID-19 vaccines. Refer to the Decision Tree for guidance on eligibility.

Many in-person days and workdays have been lost because of quarantining ECE staff and attendees. Test to Stay (TTS) is an alternative to quarantine which allows close contacts who can consistently mask to remain in school with serial testing.

### Definitions:

**Close contact** –A staff member or attendee who is not fully vaccinated (two weeks after the last dose of the primary series) and within 6 feet of a positive case of COVID-19 for 15 minutes or longer cumulatively over a 24-hour period.

For individuals who are 6 months to under 2 years of age and unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, the recommendation is to quarantine at home for 10 days from the most recent date of exposure (day 0).

For close contacts 2 years and older, who can consistently mask, TTS is an alternative to quarantine and allows close contacts to remain in the ECE if they:

- test negative,
- remain asymptomatic,
- and consistently and correctly wear a mask.

### Steps:

1. The ECE identifies or is informed of a staff member or attendee who is a close contact. The exposure may be from any setting: ECE, household, extra-curricular activity, etc.
  - a. Enter case and close contact information into the Excel COVID-19 Exposure List
  - b. Report the case to LCHD using the [REDCap form](#)

- c. Upload the Excel COVID-19 Exposure List [REDCap](#)
2. Obtain parental consent for participation in TTS. Parental consent can be obtained once for the entire year.
3. Close contacts should test at least two times during the period between being identified as a close contact and day 7 (Day of exposure = Day 0).
  - a. Recommended cadence is on Monday and Thursday after the last date of exposure.
  - b. If the exposure is on a Sunday, the close contacts should test on Tuesday and the Thursday/Friday after the exposure.
4. During the testing cadence, children that are close contacts should mask to the best of their abilities and staff members that are close contacts must mask.
5. Rapid antigen tests, including at-home tests, may be most appropriate for TTS. Testing may be conducted in school or at home preferably before the start of the school day.
  - a. Free at home COVID-19 tests; [order 8 free tests NOW](#) so you can have them when you need them.
6. Options to report results to the ECE
  - a. For at-home tests, a screenshot or photo of the negative test result should be sent to the ECE that includes:
    - i. Name
    - ii. Date of Birth
    - iii. Date the test was taken
  - b. Test by lab-based PCR or antigen test – Submit result to the ECE
7. The ECE may collect results on the Excel COVID-19 Exposure List for documentation purposes. Record name and test/symptom onset date of positive individuals to maintain a record of the infection. Please keep in mind, these individuals should not be tested for 90 days post infections UNLESS they develop new symptoms.
8. Report positive test of close contacts results to LCHD using [REDCap](#)
  - a. You can upload the Excel COVID-19 Exposure List to [REDCap](#) with all results
  - b. A positive test in a close contact is a conversion case. TTS restarts for all individuals who were exposed and re-exposed to this new case.
  - c. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for 5-days at home. They may return to the ECE for days 6–10 if they do not have any fever or diarrhea for at least 24 hours without symptom reducing medication and can mask consistently at all times in the ECE.

9. For the first five days after exposure, TTS participants should avoid social gatherings and remain at home when not at ECE functions. If at any time the student tests positive or becomes symptomatic, they should be immediately isolated and sent home and the school should notify the local health department.
  
10. Regardless of when an individual returns to school, daily symptom monitoring should continue through day 10 after the exposure. If any symptoms develop, the individual should immediately self-isolate and be tested.
  
11. During outbreaks (2 or more cases epidemiologically linked) the LCHD may request that staff and/or attendees get tested regardless of vaccination status.