



September 24, 2021

Hello PIC Families,

I am writing to share that we are seeing a notable increase in the number of children and staff members who have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Typically this is being reported by a parent who has tested positive. Because most of those we have communicated with are fully vaccinated, the person who tested positive has not been seriously ill or hospitalized, and typically was tested for minor COVID-like symptoms.

This positive test result of a family member immediately leads to the PIC enrolled child needing to quarantine:

- **10 days if the family member (or other COVID positive household member) CAN isolate from others, or**
- **20 days of quarantine if this isolation is not possible. (10 days for the family member + 10 days for the child)**

We are seeing a smaller, yet notable, increase in children who are testing positive for COVID-19 or who have been exposed to a friend outside of PIC who has tested positive. These exposures are being reported when children attend gatherings outside of PIC with friends, and most often when some of the gathering is unmasked.

Last, we are also seeing an increase in the number of children we need to send home from PIC because they are experiencing COVID-like symptoms while here. These symptoms most often resemble a very typical cold (fever, cough, runny nose, etc.) In these cases, most parents have opted to get their child tested for COVID-19, as this is the quickest way to return to PIC. However, we require a child to be fever-free and for other symptoms (cough, runny nose, etc.) to be improving, even with a negative test result.

A word on testing:

PCR tests remain the preferred method of testing for COVID due to their extremely high sensitivity and specificity for detecting COVID infection. Recently, it may take several days to obtain this PCR test and/or the results, and we understand that this may result in lost days of childcare and work for PIC families.

As a result, we will now accept rapid antigen testing for COVID for ONLY the following scenario:

- **The child is symptomatic (has fever, runny nose, cough, etc), AND**
- **The child has NOT been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.**

Rapid antigen tests have been shown to perform well in symptomatic COVID cases, and thus is a reasonable alternative in this situation. The rapid antigen test **CANNOT** be used to shorten quarantine after a COVID exposure, clear someone for return to PIC if they have symptoms and have had a COVID exposure, or to evaluate someone who does not have symptoms.

We will only accept rapid antigen tests performed by medical professionals (e.g., at a pharmacy, doctor's office, urgent care center, testing site). **We are NOT currently accepting at-home COVID test results, due to the inability to ensure quality control.** For example, if a home test is performed suboptimally, you may get a false-negative result which could put PIC staff and children at risk.

We are hearing some reports of testing sites that seem to work better than others in terms of getting a faster appointment and test results. Here is some info that has been shared with us.

Drexel Mobile Testing Unit

<https://drexel.edu/now/events/calendar/details/?eid=33843&iid=89649>

CHOP Roberts Center for Pediatric Research

<https://www.chop.edu/covid-19-testing-kids>

CHOP COVID Hotline is a resource for both CHOP employees and the greater Philadelphia community. Anyone can call the hotline at 800-722-7112 to find the appropriate **testing needed for children and adults.**

I know how challenging this all continues to be for working parents. We want to do all we can to keep any community spread of COVID-19 away from PIC as much as humanly possible. This will allow us to continue to keep our doors open.

This WILL end. This week there is more hopeful news of the vaccine on the close horizon for children ages 5-12. *Keep wearing masks, wash your hands a lot, keep away from groups when you do not know the vaccination status of those in the group, and please get vaccinated when you can.*

Thank you for your continued partnership.

