

# Frequently Asked Questions

## General questions

### **How does KinderCare make decisions regarding coronavirus?**

We're working closely with the CDC and state and local health departments to respond as quickly as possible to their latest guidance and direction.

### **How does coronavirus spread?**

The [CDC](#) is a good resource for the latest information on how coronavirus spreads. Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) is a relatively new disease, and as we continue through the pandemic we continue to learn more about new variants and their severity.

### **What are your criteria for closing a classroom or center?**

We follow guidance from the CDC and/or local health departments when making the decision to close a classroom or center. We have developed our own internal response plan (in partnership with these agencies and our own medical advisors) in an effort to secure a safe environment for staff and children.

### **How likely is it that a center would close?**

We know that COVID-19 is impacting every community we serve. While we cannot predict the likelihood of a center or classrooms closing, we know that the precautions we take in our center (including wellness checks for all who enter, wearing masks in our center, weekly testing for unvaccinated teachers, and social distancing) are helping to limit the spread within our centers. Any decision to close a center or classroom will be made based on guidance and instruction from the CDC and local health departments. If a center or classroom closure is required, center directors will keep families updated with frequent correspondence.

### **What if you don't have enough teachers because they are all out due to the impacts of COVID-19?**

We always do our best to find staffing coverage if a teacher calls in sick due to illness. In the event that we cannot find coverage, we may have to close the classroom temporarily. Staying home if you are sick is the best way to prevent the spread of illness, and we want our staff to feel healthy and well before returning to our center. We assess and monitor the wellness of our staff before they enter our center and throughout the day.

### **How would we be notified about closures and reopening?**

We will communicate closures and reopening with you via phone, email, and/or the KinderCare app (in all centers where applicable). If your classroom or center should close, your center director will keep you updated throughout the process and let you know when it's safe to return.

### **Do I get charged tuition if the center is closed due to COVID-19 concerns and will my child's spot be held?**

When a center closes due to illness, we follow the same protocol we would if the center were to close due to inclement weather.

- For the first 3 full business days of a center or classroom closure, you will be charged tuition so we can maintain teacher pay. This is critical to the retention of our teachers and helps ensure we provide a consistent experience for your child when the center reopens.
- After 3 full business days, you will not be charged tuition until the center or classroom reopens.
- Note that if we don't have enough teachers to open the center or classroom, we will NOT charge you tuition during the closure.

### Keeping our children and staff safe and healthy

#### **Are children required to wear masks?**

We know that [wearing masks is one of the best ways to slow the spread of illness](#), especially an airborne virus like COVID-19. Because of this, our mask guidance is as follows:

- We strongly recommend children ages 2+ wear a mask and expect these children to bring a mask with them to our center. If children do not have a mask, we can provide one.
- We require all children ages 5+ and children in our school-age classrooms to wear a mask.
- We require all adults (parents, staff, and any visitor) to wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status.

#### **How are you keeping children safe and healthy in your centers?**

We follow the [latest guidance from the CDC](#) and keeping up-to-date with community-specific guidance from local health departments.

In our centers, we're practicing extra precautions to ensure your children's health and safety. [Please see a complete list of our pandemic-responsive health and safety measures.](#)

Before staff arrive at our center and before children are dropped off, families and staff must undergo a wellness screening to ensure they are healthy and well. We monitor and assess the wellness of staff and children throughout the day. We always take precautions like wearing gloves when handling food, changing diapers or assisting children with toileting. We do our best to maintain social distance in our centers and on the playground. Staff and children wash their hands when they enter the classroom, and throughout the day as necessary.

To ensure the safety and well-being of everyone in our community, we're being vigilant about enforcing our policy of excluding all children who have been sick until they've been symptom-free without medication for at least 24 hours (depending on your state's requirements). While

we realize this may be a burden, staying home when sick is one of the best ways to keep illness from spreading.

### **How does coronavirus affect children?**

News about how COVID-19 impacts children is coming out every day. The CDC has the [most up-to-date and reliable guidance for young children](#).

### **What personal protective equipment (PPE) do you use in your centers to protect children and staff?**

All center staff are required to wear masks, and we expect that all children ages 2+ wear a mask in our centers. We have face shields and smocks available for staff who want additional PPE. We also make sure our staff wear gloves and take necessary precautions while handling food, changing diapers, and assisting children with toileting. Our staff frequently wash their hands to prevent the spread of illness.

### **How do you limit exposure between classrooms?**

At the beginning of the pandemic, we implemented a “pod” structure where children are grouped appropriately to stay separated from others. Teachers and staff will also stay within their assigned pod each day to minimize cross-contamination. As we begin to reassess our health and safety procedures in communities where the spread has slowed, your center may adopt “homerom” classrooms in addition to pods. In some centers, these classrooms will serve as your point of pick-up and drop-off each day and will allow us to create a quick and safe solution for starting and ending your child’s day. These “homeroms” will combine children of multiple ages under supervision, with developmentally appropriate activities.

We also limit exposure between classrooms by ensuring that staff wash their hands when they enter a classroom, and wear masks. We continue to limit classroom access to staff and children only. Some centers allow families to drop-off at the classroom door, while others are dropped off in the lobby. Please speak with your center director about drop-off protocols at your center.

### **What if a child or teacher shows symptoms associated with coronavirus while they are at the center?**

We continue to assess and monitor the wellness of children and staff throughout the day. If your child shows signs of illness in our care, you will be notified immediately.

If a child or teacher begins to show symptoms of coronavirus or any other illness, we’ll follow our illness policy. In that case, the child or teacher would be asked to return home, and as applicable see a doctor, and partner with the local health department to obtain a recommendation on how to proceed. If a child or teacher become sick, we ask that they stay home until they’ve been symptom-free without medication or for at least 24 hours (depending on your state’s requirements).

We'll continue to be diligent about enforcing our existing policy of excluding sick children and employees. While we understand the additional burden this may cause, staying home when sick is one of the best ways to stop illness from spreading.

### **What can I do with my child to help prevent transmission?**

We see our centers as safe and clean sanctuaries for children to learn and grow, and we need your partnership. Please review our [updated health and safety measures so you're prepared for our pick-up and drop-off procedures](#). Many of these measures can be done at home or when out in public to help keep your child healthy and safe.

If your child has a fever or trouble breathing, they must stay home until they've been symptom-free without medication for at least 24 hours (depending on your state's requirements). If you choose to keep your child at home, please call your center and let us know. While we understand the additional burden this may cause, staying home when sick is one of the best ways to stop illness from spreading.

[Testing is now available for COVID-19](#). If you think your child may have coronavirus, contact your health care provider to inquire about testing and next steps. Children ages 5 and up are eligible for a [COVID-19 vaccine](#). You should consult your pediatrician about vaccines for your child.

### **Does KinderCare have the necessary cleaning supplies?**

Yes, we have all necessary supplies available in all of our centers. We use hospital-grade cleaning products from EcoLab to keep our centers and our playgrounds safe. If you have any concerns, please contact your center director directly.

### **How are you ensuring the cleanliness of the center?**

We're diligently cleaning and disinfecting the center throughout the day, as well as regularly practicing good handwashing and respiratory etiquette. These are the most effective methods outlined by the CDC to prevent spreading illness.

### **Can my family attend the center after vacation/travel? Do we have to quarantine for 14 days before we return to the center?**

Being part of a center community means you have an obligation to inform your center director when there may be an opportunity for increased risk or exposure to COVID-19. When traveling, some areas and activities pose a higher risk than others. Please let your center director know about any activities that might increase your family's risk of exposure to determine if you should stay home from the center for 14 days when you return. See [tips from the CDC](#) and the [CDC's FAQs](#) for additional guidance around traveling during the pandemic. [Testing is available for COVID-19](#). While we do not require families to show proof of negative test result before returning to our center, you may find it helpful for your own peace of mind. Talk with your healthcare provider about testing for COVID-19.

## Supporting our teachers and staff

### **How is KinderCare taking care of employees that are impacted by coronavirus?**

Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our employees and the children and families we serve every day. We have a dedicated team supporting all our centers across the country to ensure they have what they need to continue serving our communities. We also support our teachers' decisions around their and their families' health and safety, and are providing them with options for how to cover their time off should they choose to stay home.

### **What happens if a teacher or staff member believes they had direct exposure or close contact with a confirmed case in the community?**

In this instance, we'd work with the teacher or staff member to gather details and then work with the local health department for their guidance. This may mean asking the teacher to stay home until we have guidance from the local health department.

If the employee confirms they've had close contact exposure to a confirmed case, we follow quarantine guidance from the CDC and local health departments. You will be notified if a staff member's absence impacts your classroom.

### **Do you require your staff to be vaccinated for COVID-19?**

At KinderCare, our highest priority has always been to do everything in our power to keep our teachers, children, families, and communities as safe and healthy as possible. Throughout the pandemic we've evolved our health and safety practices as more information about COVID has become available. To keep our center community as healthy as possible, we require our staff to either be vaccinated, or undergo weekly testing. If weekly testing is not an option due to local requirements, we'll work with each unvaccinated teacher one-on-one to determine the best course of action for them. Where local vaccination requirements differ from KinderCare's policies, we'll follow whichever guidelines are stricter.