

## Purpose

These guidelines are intended to help child care facilities identify, report, control, and prevent suspected influenza outbreaks.

## Criteria for Reporting Suspected Influenza Outbreaks

Monitoring for absenteeism and parent reports of influenza in attendees and staff can help in identifying potential influenza outbreaks. Immediately notify the regional health department when:

- Two or more individuals who test positive for influenza are reported in a shared setting (e.g., classroom or shared room) within 72 hours of each other (i.e., individual is reported to have tested positive for influenza by a lab test such as a rapid influenza test, culture, real-time PCR, DFA, or IFA).
- \*20% or more of students are absent or sent home on a given day in a group/cohort or shared setting (i.e., a classroom, sports team, or other epidemiologically linked group) attributed to influenza (e.g., in a group with 20 students contact DHEC when at least four students were absent or sent home with reported influenza).

\*For shared settings with more than 5 children/staff total

**Please note: Outbreaks should be considered over when influenza absenteeism numbers within the child care center decrease to a percentage below the criteria listed above or no new influenza cases have been reported for five consecutive business days. Report a new outbreak if your child care facility meets the above listed criteria again during the influenza season and a minimum of five days has passed.**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, determining if someone has COVID-19 or influenza will be difficult based on symptoms alone. Therefore, if multiple individuals (students or staff) are noted to have similar symptoms of influenza-like illness (ILI) or other symptoms related to influenza or COVID-19, testing should be recommended for these individuals to determine if influenza or COVID-19 are causing their illness.

## What to Report

Report as much of the following information that's available when notifying the regional health department of a suspected influenza outbreak:

- Name of child care facility
- Number of attendees and staff who are ill with similar symptoms or absent
- Baseline attendee absenteeism per day (i.e., the number of attendees who are typically absent per day)

- Individuals who have tested positive for influenza, age, sex and location (e.g., classroom or shared room)
- COVID-19 test results for ill individuals, if available
- Earliest illness onset date and latest illness onset date
- Total facility enrollment
- Total number of attendees and staff in shared setting (e.g., classroom or shared room), if applicable

## Subsequent Reporting

Report all ill cases (e.g. children and staff) at least weekly using a line list (provided by the regional health department personnel).

## How to Report

Report influenza outbreaks and subsequent outbreak information to the regional health department where the facility is located. Contact information for regional health departments can be found at: [scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-009025.pdf](https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-009025.pdf)

## Completed



### Recommendations for Prevention and Control

### Resources

#### Vaccination



Encourage the annual influenza vaccine. CDC recommends everyone who is 6 months of age and older should get the influenza vaccine, unless medically contraindicated.

[cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm)



Recommend yearly flu shots for anyone who cares for children <6 months of age.

#### Good Hygiene Etiquette



Ensure staff members are trained on appropriate hand hygiene practices.



Post signage to remind staff of proper handwashing procedures.

[cdc.gov/handwashing/](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/)



Provide available, suitable sinks for children. Staff should assist children with handwashing and teach children proper procedures.



Reinforce to staff that handwashing should occur after each diaper change.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iFEvkbaFh4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iFEvkbaFh4)



Reinforce to children and staff that they should cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or their upper sleeve (if tissue is not available) when they cough or sneeze. Place tissue in a trash receptacle after use.

[cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm)



Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer after coughing or sneezing.

## Limit Contact with Others When Sick



Avoid close contact (i.e., within six feet) with ill persons.



Stay home when experiencing influenza or influenza like illness (ILI) until free from fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.



Ensure staff and students with influenza or ILI are appropriately excluded from school. Follow the guidance outlined in the School and Childcare Exclusion List.

[scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-011634.pdf](https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-011634.pdf)



Ensure procedures are in place to monitor reports of illness in children and staff, including checking the health status of children as they arrive at the facility each day.

## Clean and Disinfect Surfaces



Follow your facility's policies for cleaning and disinfecting. In particular, ensure that frequently touched surfaces such as door knobs, tables, desks, computer keyboards, handrails, etc., are routinely cleaned.

[cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm](https://cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm)

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