

Children and COVID-19 (Early Learning and Childcare) 28/01/22

1) Before attending:

Symptoms – Please make sure all staff and families are aware not to attend if they have any symptoms of Covid-19 infection.

Symptom profiles are available here [[symptoms](#)] and we advise parents to take a precautionary approach, particularly for children less able to articulate their symptoms; that is if a child appears unwell observe them at home and contact their GP as appropriate.

2) What to do when a confirmed case of Covid-19 arises that is connected with the Early Learning and Childcare setting:

It is inevitable that cases of Covid-19 will arise in **Early Learning and Childcare settings**, just as they are currently arising in the community. It is recommended and assumed that these settings are implementing the recommended infection prevention and control measures.

There are some key messages that you need to remember when cases arise:

The case is excluded from the setting.

Whole rooms do not need to be sent home or told not to come in to the facility.

When multiple cases of Covid-19 arise in a room, those cases should be excluded and other children in the room are offered tests according to current guidance - those children and staff do **not** need to be excluded from the facility unless they develop symptoms or have a positive test.

Note - If a child is identified as a CLOSE CONTACT of a case in their HOUSEHOLD they will have to restrict their movements (stay at home) for 7 days and be tested as per national guidelines for household close contacts. It is important that anyone who has been identified as a close contact, is very aware of COVID-19 symptoms, and isolates and undergoes testing should they develop any symptoms.

Other than adhering to these actions in relation to Covid-19 cases, there is no Public Health reason that you need to exclude a whole room or to close a facility.

It is important to remember that the confirmed case is no longer within the facility and therefore the risk of onward transmission from that person has been removed from the Early Learning and Childcare setting.

If the case was not in the facility whilst infectious, then the facility will not need to take any action because there is no significant risk that the case has spread the infection in the facility. The 'infectious period' is the timeframe during which someone with an infectious disease can spread it to other people – the 'infectious period' for

Covid-19 includes the 24 hours before testing for asymptomatic cases, or the 48 hours before symptom onset for symptomatic cases.

Children who have symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home, isolate and arrange to have a PCR test, either online or through a GP.

HSE live Covid-19 helpline

For specific queries relating to confirmed cases of Covid-19 within your setting that are not covered by the above advice or the current infection prevention and control (IPC) and Public Health guidance, please continue to use the '**HSE live Covid-19 helpline**' on 01 511 9777. The operator will take basic details, but you should not provide personal details (names etc) of children or staff. It is not routine procedure at this time for ELC settings to receive a call back from Public Health. However, this may occur as required from time to time depending on specific circumstances.