



# Health Advisory: COVID-19 Testing For Children in Childcares and Summer Camps

June 10, 2020

## SITUATIONAL UPDATE

The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) now requires that children in childcares and summer day camps who have certain symptoms of COVID-19 be tested before they can return to childcare or camp. Guidance for childcares and camps, “COVID-19 Health Checks at Programs for Children and Youth,” and for families, “Parent Handout: COVID-19 Health Checks/If Your Child has Symptoms” have been posted on-line at <https://www.sfchcp.org/covidschoolschildcare>.

Childcares and summer camps must exclude children who have had any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours, if symptoms are new, different, and not otherwise explained:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Appearing or behaving sick, in the parent’s or guardian’s judgement

Children may not return until the following conditions are met:

- The child has a negative COVID-19 viral PCR test and
- At least 72 hours have passed since fever resolution and symptom improvement, without use of anti-pyretic medication

The parent must show proof of the negative test to the childcare or camp. Proof may include a clinic message or test result accessed through an EHR patient portal, written note, email, or other electronic communication. A separate clinic or doctor’s note is not required.

Children who are not tested may return to childcare or camp 10 days after symptoms appeared and 72 hours after fever resolution and symptom improvement. A clinic or doctor’s note is not required.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Clinicians are **strongly encouraged** to test children who need proof of a negative COVID-19 test to return to childcare or summer camp, even if the child does not meet the clinic’s criteria for testing.



- If a definitive cause cannot be found, clinicians should not clear a child to return to childcare or camp without a negative COVID-19 test. For example, children with upper respiratory infections, influenza-like illness, acute gastroenteritis, and viral syndromes should not return to childcare or camp without a negative COVID-19 test. Children whose symptoms have resolved by the time they are evaluated also should not be cleared to return to camp without a negative COVID-19 test.
- If a definitive cause is found for a child's symptoms, such as strep throat or hand-foot-and-mouth disease, the clinician may provide a note stating that child may return to childcare or camp, without testing the child for COVID-19. The note may be an email, electronic message or part of an after-visit summary.

SFDPH has provided guidance to child care programs and summer day camps instructing them to accept a note from a clinician allowing a child to return. This guidance states that a note allowing the child to return only means that a definitive cause was found for the symptoms caused the child to be excluded from childcare or camp. It does not mean that the child does not have COVID-19, since many children are asymptomatic.

- Clinicians should continue to send specimens for testing at their usual commercial or clinical laboratories per their institution's policy. However, if the clinic is experiencing delays in obtaining COVID-19 results from their usual laboratory, samples can be sent to the SF Public Health Lab without the need for prior approval. Please use the COVID-19-specific specimen collection form at <https://www.sfcddcp.org/public-health-lab/forms-specimen-culture-submission/>.
- Clinicians unable to collect specimens at their location may call the SFDPH COVID-19 Clinical Consultation line at 415-554-2830 to refer patients to a SF Health Network site for testing. Be sure to provide the age of the patient.