



Office of Children and Family Services

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

SHEILA J. POOLE
Commissioner

December 30, 2021

Dear Licensed, Registered or Legally-exempt Group Provider:

As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise, we would like to remind everyone of the importance to maintain strict hygiene and cleaning protocols, mask wearing, and monitoring for any symptoms of COVID-19.

We would also like to let you know that the NYS Department of Health has recently issued new guidance regarding returning to work for vaccinated staff, including those in the child care field, who have tested positive for COVID-19. Attached to this email is DOH's "Advisory on Shortening Isolation Period for Certain Fully Vaccinated Healthcare Workers and Other Critical Workforce". Please read this information carefully as it may impact your child care program. It allows a vaccinated child care worker to return to work after a shortened (5 day) isolation so long as they are exhibiting mild or no symptoms.

As a reminder, all individuals age 2 and older who are medically able to wear a face covering are required to do so while in a child care program. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) continue to recommend face coverings and vaccination as the primary tools to keep people safe from COVID-19. For information on the effectiveness of mask wearing please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

As of November 3, 2021, children ages 5 – 11 are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine is safe, effective, and will protect New York's children and adolescents from the virus. Information on vaccination for children can be found on the New York State Department of Health website: <https://www.health.ny.gov/>

Since most of the children enrolled in child care programs are not eligible to be vaccinated, it is more important than ever that adults continue to follow the recommended safety protocols: wear a well-fitted face covering, stay home if you have symptoms of COVID-19, wash hands frequently, and maintain social distance whenever possible. Immediately isolate and report all positive cases of COVID-19 to your local Department of Health, and your regulator.

While we welcome the new year, OCFS extends our sincere gratitude for your commitment to the wellbeing of our children. Wishing you all a peaceful and healthy 2022!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janice Molnar".

Janice Molnar, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner