A guide to the latest Covid-19 guidance for early years providers

With the days of lockdown now long behind us, we are now in a period of 'living with Covid-19' – but what exactly does this mean in practice? Should we still be testing for Covid-19, and what happens if a child or staff member at an early years setting displays symptoms or tests positive?

We answer the most frequently asked questions below. All information is based on guidance from the Department for Education.

Should parents and carers still be testing their children for Covid-19?

UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance says that it is not recommended that children and young people are tested for Covid-19 unless directed to by a health professional.

Can children still attend early years settings if they are displaying symptoms of Covid-19?

The DfE advises that children with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough who are otherwise well can continue to attend their setting. However, those who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people where they can. It is advised that they only return to their setting when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.

What should we do if a child tests positive for Covid-19?

UKHSA guidance says that it is not recommended that children and young people are tested for Covid-19 unless directed to by a health professional. For children and young people aged 18 and under who are recommended to take a Covid-19 test by a health professional and test positive, the advice is to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for three days. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

What should we do if a staff member tests positive for Covid-19?

Adults with a positive Covid-19 test result are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for five days, which is when they are most infectious.