



February 23, 2024

Dear ECEC Family,

A child at the ECEC has a confirmed case of influenza. This message includes information about this condition and the related exclusion and return-to-care practices at our site. Without violating the confidentiality of this child, the facts you need to know about your child's possible exposure in this situation are below.

**What is influenza?** It's a contagious disease caused by a group of respiratory (influenza) viruses.

**What are the signs and symptoms?**

- Sudden onset of fever
- Muscle aches and pains
- Mild pinkeye
- Nausea and vomiting
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Decreased energy
- In young infants: croup, bronchiolitis, or pneumonia
- Chills
- Cough
- Abdominal pain

**What are the contagious periods?** From the day before signs/symptoms appear until at least 7 days after the onset of flu. Virus shedding can be longer in children with compromised immune systems.

**How is it spread?** *Direct contact* from sneezing and coughing in most cases; and *indirect contact* from contaminated hands and articles soiled with nose and throat secretions.

**How do you control it?**

- Annual immunization for all children 6 months to 18 years.
- Parents and adults in the home should receive their annual flu shot.
- Handwashing is key. Use good handwashing techniques after using the restroom, blowing your nose in tissue, sneezing or coughing in your hands, and eating.
- Teach children to properly wash hands after soiling them.

**What should I do at home?** Continue to wash hands. If your child shows signs/symptoms of flu, keep them home. Avoid using aspirin for anyone with influenza as there is an increased risk of Reye Syndrome during this time. Reye Syndrome is the swelling of the brain or liver after illnesses, such as flu.

**Exclusion Criteria:** Child has a fever and/or has nausea/vomiting. Children may also face exclusion if they are unable to participate in classroom activities, and staff determine they cannot care for the child without compromising their ability to care for other children in the classroom.

**Return to Care when** you (1) have a doctor's note stating the child is cleared to participate in school, and (2) the child is fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours.

Should your child present any of these symptoms, we recommend you consult your healthcare provider. Children presenting these signs and symptoms will be excluded from school and must have a note from a healthcare provider stating they are under treatment. **Please provide a doctor's note of clearance to return to school.**

If you have any questions, please contact the ECEC Health Office at 480-362-2254/2210 or the Health and Nutrition Coordinator at 480-362-2206.

Respectfully,

**Tami Brungard**  
Early Childhood Education Leader



Adapted from *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide*. American Academy of Pediatrics