



Date: Winter 2022

To: Day Care, School, and Childcare Providers

From: LA County DHS Pediatrics

RE: Return to School or Daycare after Respiratory Illness

A patient at our health center has requested a letter regarding their respiratory illness for return to daycare or school. Like you, we are concerned about the high rates of respiratory illness this season, and we hope to partner with the community to provide appropriate medical care to support safe school and work environments.

When an infant or child has a respiratory illness, they do not require any specific testing for COVID-19, Flu, or RSV unless they are very ill or hospitalized. We do not recommend in-person medical assessment for mild illness, and our nurse advice line provides patients and their caregivers with instructions on how to manage fever, cough, and congestion and how and when to seek in-person attention for more severe illness.

Our facilities do not routinely test for specific respiratory viruses when patients are not seriously ill, but we do provide the following recommendations for return to school or daycare:

- Resolving symptoms and >72 hours from the start of symptoms
 - Note: patients with a known COVID-19 diagnosis should remain out of school/daycare longer based on local public health guidelines
- No fever for >24 hours
- Ability to participate in regular school/daycare activities

After respiratory illness, especially RSV, many infants and children will have congestion that lasts up to 10-14 days and a cough that lasts for several weeks. These lingering symptoms should not prevent return to daycare or school if the infant/child meets the criteria above.

We ask that you do not require infants/children to come for in-person visits for school/daycare notes or for evaluation of mild illness. These visits are not medically necessary and take up valuable spots for those who need routine health care or visits for more serious illness.

Thank you for your understanding during this challenging winter season.