



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Child Development  
and Early Education

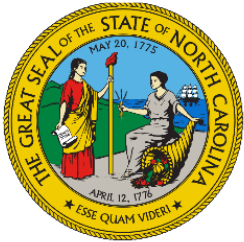
# **COVID-19 in NC and the ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit: What You Need to Know Now**

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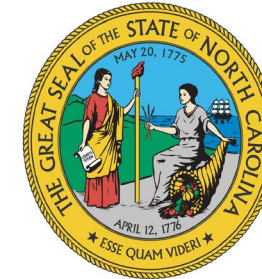
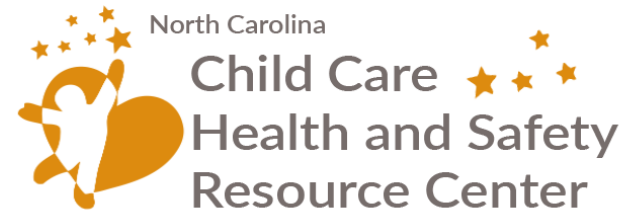
March 17, 2022



# It's a team effort!



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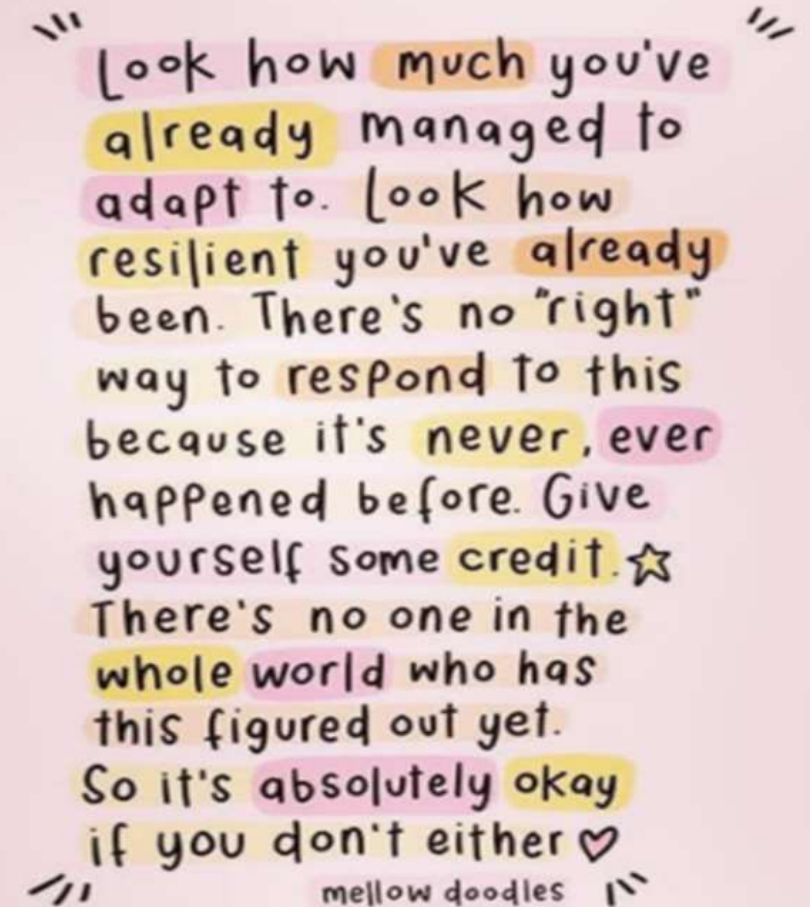


NC DEPARTMENT OF  
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Division of Child and Family Well-Being

# Creating a Safe Space

**Rapid changes in the Toolkit may provoke a wide range of feelings.**

**We ask that participants be respectful that their way of thinking may not be the same as others.**



“Look how much you've  
already managed to  
adapt to. Look how  
resilient you've already  
been. There's no “right”  
way to respond to this  
because it's never, ever  
happened before. Give  
yourself some credit. ☆  
There's no one in the  
whole world who has  
this figured out yet.  
So it's absolutely okay  
if you don't either ♡  
mellow doodles”

# Agenda

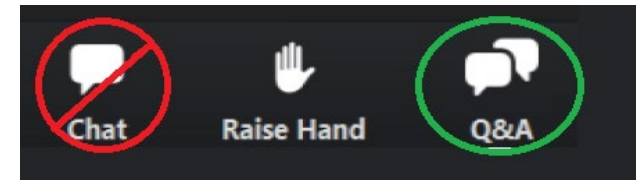
## What We are Covering Today

- **Contact tracing**
- **Content not specific to COVID**
- **Changes to exclusion**
  - After having COVID
  - After being exposed to COVID
- **Changes to masking**
  - Universal masking
  - Masking after having COVID and after being exposed to COVID

## Questions and Answers

Please hold your questions until the end, as they will likely be answered during the presentation.

If you have questions that are **not answered in the presentation**, please put the questions into the **Q&A feature** at the bottom of your screen.



# Level Setting

**August 2021:** The Toolkit was reorganized into 3 categories.

- Strategies that are **required**
  - These strategies are based on existing North Carolina laws, Administrative Rule, or public health directive and must be followed by all child care providers.
  - **Requirements appear in red.**
- Strategies that **NC DHHS recommends that child care programs require**
  - These strategies, if not implemented, create conditions of high risk for COVID-19 exposure and spread. NCDHHS strongly advises that child care programs adopt all the strategies in these sections.
  - Strategies in this category are labelled “should”.
- Strategies that child care programs **should consider** adopting
  - These are strategies to provide additional layers of prevention and that, if implemented, will further reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread.

# When an Individual with COVID-19 is Identified at Child Care

- **Child care programs must notify the local health department of the positive case.**
- **Local health departments are no longer contact tracing exposures in low risk settings such as child care.**
- **Child care programs should notify staff and families of children who have been exposed so they can receive appropriate public health guidance, testing, and access to any resources that might be needed.**

Sample Letter to Families About Exposure to Communicable Disease

Child care programs should refer to and/or attach information about the communicable disease from:

- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools - [shop.aap.org/managing-infectious-diseases-in-child-care-and-schools-5th-ed-paperback/](http://shop.aap.org/managing-infectious-diseases-in-child-care-and-schools-5th-ed-paperback/)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - Children under age 4: [cdc.gov/parents/infants/diseases\\_conditions.html](https://cdc.gov/parents/infants/diseases_conditions.html)
  - Children ages 4-11: [cdc.gov/parents/children/diseases\\_conditions.html](https://cdc.gov/parents/children/diseases_conditions.html)
- Communicable Diseases and Exclusion from Child Care - [healthychildcare.unc.edu/resources/fact-sheets/communicable-diseases-and-exclusion-from-child-care](http://healthychildcare.unc.edu/resources/fact-sheets/communicable-diseases-and-exclusion-from-child-care) (North Carolina specific)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Care Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dear Parent or Legal Guardian:**

A person in our program has/is suspected of having: \_\_\_\_\_

Information about this \_\_\_\_\_ (Child care program)



# Rationale for Changes, Part 1

## New COVID-19 variants behave differently

- More contagious
- Shorter incubation period
- Mild symptoms, sick for a shorter time, less severe
- Trends decreasing, hospitals are less overwhelmed



# Rationale for Changes, Part 2

- **Use other layered prevention strategies**
  - Widely available:
    - Testing, including at-home options
    - Vaccines and boosters which help protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death
    - Treatment for those at higher risk of severe disease
  - Continued:
    - Cohorting, or keeping groups of children and staff together during the day
    - Cleaning and hygiene
    - Ventilation





# At-Home Testing Allowed (See Returning to Child Care chart)

- At-home test devices allow an individual to test at home and get a result for a self-collected specimen.
- USPS tests cannot be shipped to business addresses.
- But families and staff can order two (2) sets of four (4) no-cost rapid antigen at-home COVID-19 tests to be sent to their residential address from [special.usps.com/testkits](https://special.usps.com/testkits)



# Exclusion - People with COVID-19

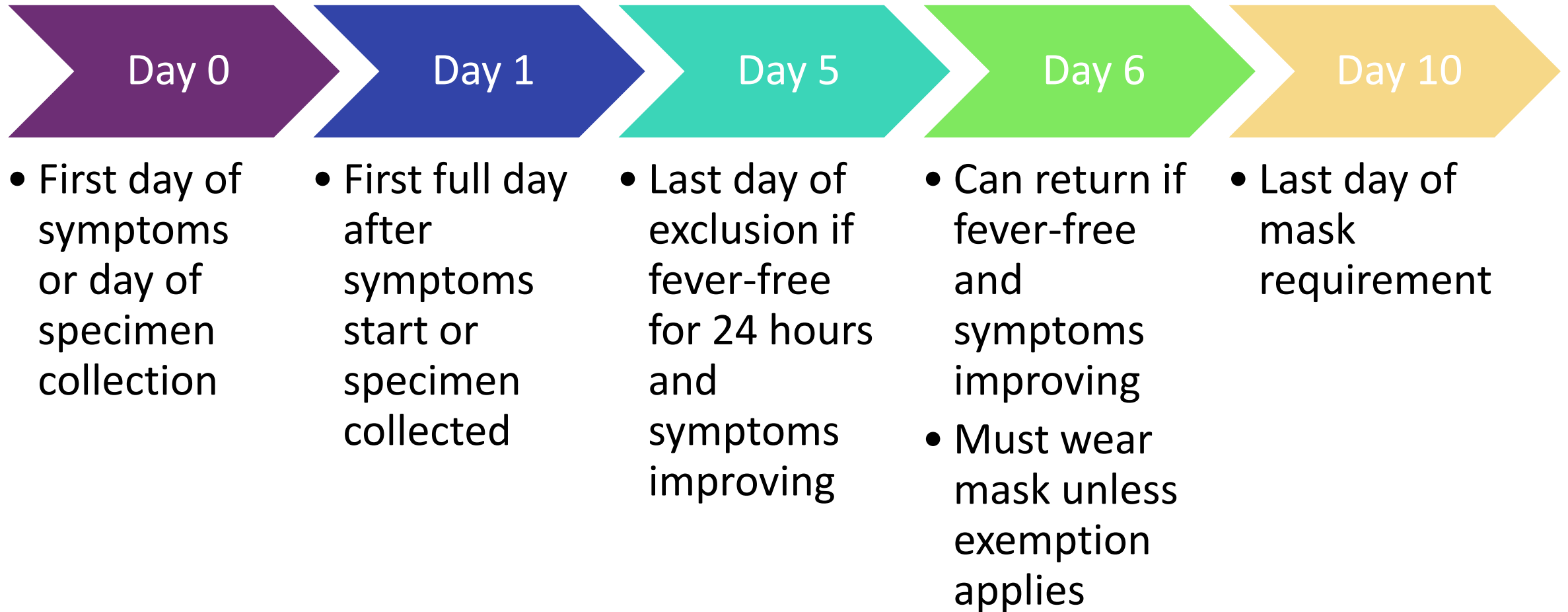
- **People with COVID-19 must be excluded from child care for 5 days after**
  - the first day of symptoms or
  - date of COVID-19 test, if asymptomatic
- **People may return to child care after 5 days if**
  - they have no symptoms or symptoms are improving **and**
  - they have been fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever reducing medications

# Masking – People with COVID-19

- **Well-fitting masks are required following a COVID-19 infection upon return to child care, including on transportation, until 10 days from**
  - the day symptoms start (if person has symptoms)
  - the day of specimen collection for individuals with no symptoms.
- **If an exemption to mask use applies, the person may return without a mask.**



# People with COVID-19



# Exclusion – People Exposed to COVID-19

NC DHHS recommends that child care facilities no longer exclude individuals after an identified exposure to COVID-19 (regardless of location of exposure) **unless they develop symptoms.**

If they develop symptoms, test positive, or are diagnosed, follow guidance for “Exclusion for people with COVID-19”.



# Masking - People Exposed to COVID-19

Child care programs should recommend people wear well-fitting masks after a known COVID-19 exposure for 10 days after the last known exposure, unless an exemption to mask use applies.



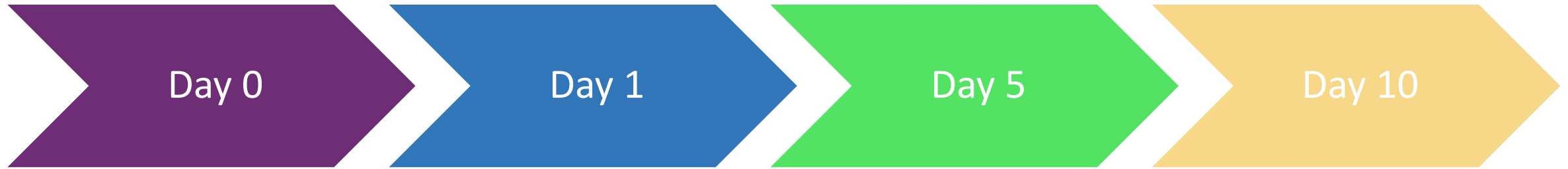
# Testing - People Exposed to COVID-19



Child care programs **should recommend** people be tested on day 5 after exposure, unless the person tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days.

- If the exposed person develops symptoms, he/she should stay home and get tested immediately.
- The exposed person may also choose to test immediately upon notification of exposure to start isolation period sooner if the test is positive

# People Exposed to COVID-19



- Day of exposure
  - First full day after last contact with a person who has COVID
  - Recommend testing unless person tested positive in last 90 days
  - Last day of mask recommendation
- 
- **As soon as exposure is known:**
    - Recommend to start/continue masking
    - Consider testing
  - **Recommend testing at any time if symptoms develop**

# Masking – General Population

## Child care programs should:

- **Recommend well-fitting masks in indoor settings for:**
  - people who are not up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccines and
  - people at [high risk for severe disease](#).
- **Support any parents and children ages 2 years and older who choose to wear a mask.**
- **Support staff who choose to wear a mask.**

# Mask Exemptions

- **Mask exemptions apply to:**
  - children less than 2 years of age
  - children who are sleeping or anyone actively eating or drinking
  - children between 2 and 5 who cannot wear a mask safely due to an inability to
    - wear a mask correctly
    - avoid frequent touching of the mask and their face
    - limit sucking, drooling, or having excess saliva on the mask
    - remove the mask without assistance
  - persons with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, for reasons related to the disability
  - adults for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty
- **Documentation of an exemption is not required.**
- **People with mask exemptions can attend child care, but are not required to mask, even after a COVID-19 infection or exposure.**



# Know What is Happening in your Program and Community

## Child care providers should:

- **continue to consult with local public health officials about transmission and vaccine rates in their community to make operational decisions.**
  - Child care programs should consider developing a COVID-19 policy to inform staff and families of how they will plan to implement the guidance in this Toolkit.
- **maintain awareness of:**
  - the effectiveness of their current policy
  - any new restrictions by state or local public health leaders that are necessary to control the spread of the disease.

# Resources

- **ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit**

- <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/media/220/download>

- **Find a Child Care Health Consultant**

- <https://healthychildcare.unc.edu/find-a-cchc/>

- **NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center COVID-19 resources:**

- [healthychildcare.unc.edu/resources/covid-19/](https://healthychildcare.unc.edu/resources/covid-19/)

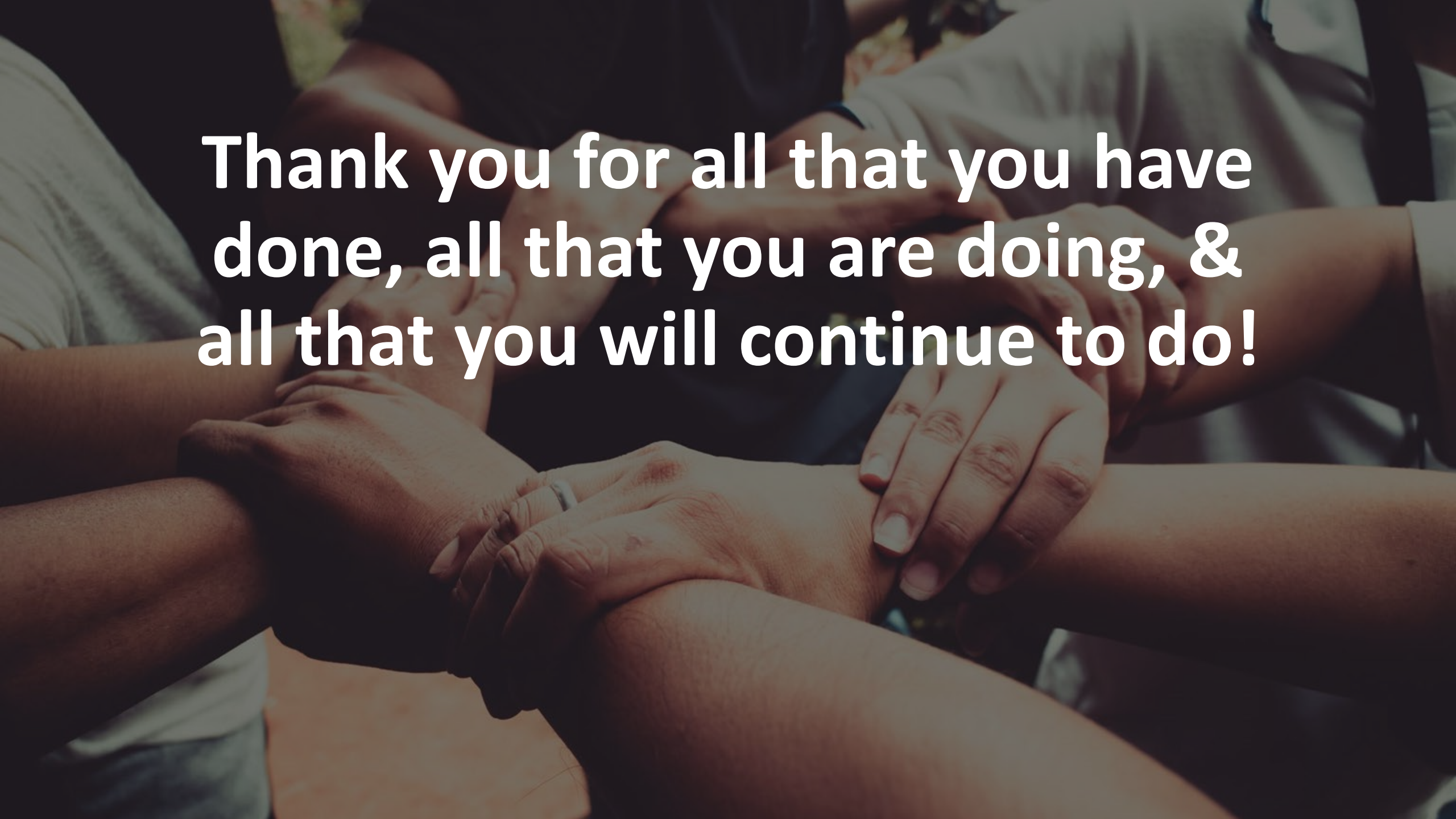
- Sample letter to families about exposure to communicable disease
    - Guidance for families (aligns with Toolkit)
    - Sample confirmation by health care provider that child with COVID-19 symptoms can return to group care

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

- COVID-19 by county: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html)

# Your Questions from the Q&A



A close-up photograph of several people's hands clasped together in a circle, creating a sense of unity and teamwork. The hands are of various skin tones and are positioned in the center of the frame. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the hands. Overlaid on the image is a white text message.

**Thank you for all that you have  
done, all that you are doing, &  
all that you will continue to do!**