



**AUGUST 15, 2022**

*Re: CDC Releases Streamlined Guidance for COVID-19*

Dear parents and colleagues:

On Thursday, August 11, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control released sweeping changes to guidance for controlling the spread of COVID-19. In response, Autism ETC is updating its COVID-19 Symptom and Exposure Protocol, effective immediately.

As you know, Autism ETC is a healthcare provider. As such, the CDC has required us to follow stricter protocols than the general public in our response to COVID-19. We have known for some time these requirements have had an adverse effect on our clients who have been unconditionally required to quarantine following a potential exposure to COVID-19. To help relieve this burden, Autism ETC has created a Dual Strategy in which we regulate our staff under the CDC's rules for healthcare providers and regulate our clients under the agency's rules for K-12 Schools and Early Care programs.

**Following the CDC's latest guidance update, clients will no longer be required to quarantine following an exposure to COVID-19. For high-risk individuals, quarantines will become optional at the parent/guardian's discretion.**

Autism ETC will move to a symptom-based testing strategy. Going forward, we will continue to contact trace and send alert emails to affected individuals when we receive news of a positive case. Rather than requiring isolation or testing for clients, we will recommend that parents remain hyper-vigilant for symptoms while at home and isolate or test if symptoms appear. Autism ETC may elect to deviate from this policy at any time if it becomes clear there is un-contained spread of COVID-19 in a clinic.

A few other important items to note with this policy change:

- We will continue daily screening of clients with a temperature check. However, we will discontinue the use of our screening questions. Instead, we will only ask if a client has experienced COVID-19 symptoms in the previous 24-hour period.
- We will continue to recommend testing on day 5 following an exposure.
- Clients that test positive for COVID-19 must continue to isolate. However, clients may plan to return to the clinic following day 5 after the positive case provided that symptoms have resolved or are improving and if they have access to at-home testing.
- The CDC has stated that it intends to update its guidance for healthcare workers in the coming days. For now, these updates will not affect COVID-19 policies for our staff. Staff will continue to rely on Autism ETC's current vaccination-based testing and isolation strategy. We will continue to update policies further as additional guidance is released.

This change has been widely-regarded as a turning point in the fight against COVID-19. We are elated this guidance will allow clients to continue to receive services when exposures occur. As the winter months approach, we remain all too aware that circumstances may change. Autism ETC will remain ready to adjust our policies to meet challenges that lie ahead. Vaccinations and boosters are now available for free to anyone in the US over the age of 6-months old. We *highly* recommend all eligible individuals receive an appropriate vaccine or booster as soon as possible. We wish you all continued health and safety.

Sincerely,

Autism ETC COVID-19 Response Team

