



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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To: Jackson County Community & Stakeholders

From: Jackson County Department of Public Health

Re: Jackson County Department of Public Health Identifies COVID-19 Cluster at Child Care Center

The Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) has identified a COVID-19 cluster at a child care center. The North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH) defines clusters of COVID-19 in workplace, educational, and other community settings as: 1) A minimum of 5 cases with illness onsets or initial positive results within a 14-day period AND, 2) plausible linkage between cases where cases were present in the same setting during the same time-period (e.g., same shift, same classroom, same physical work area); that the timing fits with likely timing of exposure; and that there is no other more likely source of exposure for identified cases (e.g., household or close contact to a confirmed case in another setting).

Seven (7) individuals at the Shepherd Early Education and Preschool have tested positive for COVID-19. The investigation is ongoing. All positive individuals are following isolation orders. Symptomatic individuals who test positive will be required to remain in isolation under the following conditions: 1) At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND, 2) At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND 3) Symptoms (like cough and shortness of breath) have improved. Asymptomatic individuals who test positive will be required to remain in isolation under the following conditions: 1) At least 10 days have passed since their positive test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

JCDPH is working to identify any additional close contacts of these individuals. The CDC defines close contact as being within approximately 6 feet of a person with an infection with COVID-19 for 15 cumulative minutes during their period of infectivity. Based on the information provided, county health officials will determine the close contacts' risk of exposure and which additional measures are needed like quarantine and/or testing.

"From the moment we knew of a positive case at the Shepherd Early Education and Preschool, we reached out to the Jackson County Department of Public Health for help. We have closed for 14 days to allow time for contact tracing, quarantine, and cleaning of the facility. The safety of our children has been and continues to be a priority for us," said Southwestern Child Development Center Direct Service Manager Annette Shook.

For information about COVID-19, look to reliable sources like JCDPH, NCDHHS, and the CDC. Visit JCDPH's website at <http://health.jacksonnc.org/covid19>. For COVID-19 questions, call the Jackson County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 828-631-HELP.

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