

The New Jersey Department of Human Services  
**Division of Developmental Disabilities**

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CORONAVIRUS DISEASE  
(COVID-19)  
UPDATE FOR FAMILIES AND  
PROVIDERS

March 16, 2021



# Agenda

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- COVID-19 Statistics
- April Webinars
- Acknowledgement
- Vaccine Eligibility
- Vaccine Information
- Group Home Visitation
- Day Program Re-Opening
- Resources

# New Jersey COVID-19 Current Statistics\*

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State of New Jersey	
Positive	744,499
Deaths	21,451

*\*This update is as of Monday, March 15, 2021.*

**For regular updates: <https://covid19.nj.gov/>**

**Consider downloading COVID Alert NJ on your Apple or Android smartphone:**

**<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/app>**



# DDD Specific COVID-19 Statistics\*

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	Community		Developmental Centers	Total
	Licensed	Own Home		
Positive	1,795	513	671	2,979
Deaths	110	48	52	210

*\*DDD-specific statistics are updated weekly. Community data includes individuals **actively** under DDD services in settings such as group homes, supervised apartments, out of state, and own-home settings.*

*Full detail, including data for individuals not under services for whom reporting is voluntary and provided for informational purposes only, can be found at [NJ Department of Human Services COVID-19 Information](#).*

# DDD April Webinar Schedule

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- April Update webinar:
  - Thursday April 1, 2021 – 10:30 am
  - Thursday April 15, 2021 – 10:30 am
  - Thursday April 29, 2021 – 10:30 am
- Use links below to register:
  - [Register for April 1 Webinar](#)
  - [Register for April 15 Webinar](#)
  - [Register for April 29 Webinar](#)

# Acknowledgement

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- This week marks one year since:
  - Congregate Day Programs were directed to close.
  - Limitations on visitation to group homes were enacted.
- The Division is appreciative of the individuals we serve, their families, providers and stakeholders for their patience.
- The Division is pleased to release updated guidance in these two areas today. This guidance will also apply to Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) programs.
- Please note that adjustments will continue to occur based on the continuing impact of COVID-19 in New Jersey.

# Vaccine Eligibility

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- Beginning March 2<sup>nd</sup>:
  - Childcare workers in licensed and registered settings;
  - Pre-K to grade 12 education sector.
- Beginning March 15<sup>th</sup>:
  - Persons experiencing homelessness, persons living in shelters and migrant workers;
  - Members of tribal communities;
  - Public and local transportation; and
  - Public safety.

# Vaccine Eligibility

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- Beginning March 15<sup>th</sup>:
  - All persons ages 16-64 with certain medical conditions that increase the risk/might increase the risk of severe illness.

Asthma (moderate or severe)	Neurologic conditions
Cancer	Obesity
Cerebrovascular Disease	Severe Obesity
Chronic Kidney Problems	Overweight
COPD	Pregnancy
Cystic Fibrosis	Pulmonary Fibrosis
Down Syndrome	Sickle cell disease
Heart Conditions	Smoking/nicotine addiction
Hypertension or High Blood Pressure	Thalassemia
Immunocompromised state	Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes mellitus
Liver Disease	



# Vaccine Eligibility

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- Beginning March 29<sup>th</sup>, frontline essential workers in the following categories:
  - Food production, agriculture, and food distribution;
  - Eldercare and support;
  - Warehousing and logistics;
  - Social services support staff – **this Includes Support Coordinators**;
  - Elections personnel;
  - Hospitality;
  - Medical supply chain;
  - Postal and shipping services;
  - Clergy; and Judicial system.

# Vaccine Information

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- Currently authorized vaccines in the United States are highly effective at protecting vaccinated people against symptomatic and severe COVID-19.
- Additionally, a growing body of evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infection and potentially less likely to transmit COVID-19 to others.

# Vaccine Information

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- At this time, people are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19
  - 2 or more weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna); or
  - 2 or more weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).
- The duration of the vaccine's protection and its ability to protect against new COVID-19 variants are still under investigation. Until more is known, prevention measures will continue to be necessary for all people, regardless of vaccination status.

# Vaccine Information

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- Vaccinated and unvaccinated people should continue to follow guidance to protect themselves and others, including wearing a well-fitted mask meeting CDC criteria, physical distancing (at least 6 feet), avoiding crowds, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often, and following any applicable workplace guidance.

# Vaccine Information

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- All persons should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19, especially following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- If symptoms develop, all people – regardless of vaccination status – should isolate and be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including COVID-19 testing if indicated.
- All persons should continue to follow current CDC and NJDOH travel guidance.

# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- The updated [Residential Visitation Guidance](#) is effective as early as March 19, 2021 so long as all required documents are signed by the resident's legal guardian.
- Residents of DDD-funded congregate residential settings have been offered COVID-19 vaccination.
  - If a DDD agency has not been offered resident vaccination for their [eligible IDD residential settings](#) they are directed to contact [DDD.PPMU@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.PPMU@dhs.nj.gov) immediately.

# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- Indoor Visitation:
  - Regardless of vaccination status, indoor visitation in group homes is required when:
    - ✦ There have been no new positive COVID-19 cases of residents and staff assigned to the residence within the past 14 days;
    - ✦ The residence is not in the process of performing COVID-19 testing of all residents and staff due to exposure; and
    - ✦ No residents or staff of the home are currently symptomatic.
  - All efforts should be made for visitation to occur within the group home.
  - If a new positive case is identified, visitation within the residence shall be suspended until the above criteria are met.

# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- **Outdoor Visits:**

- Regardless of vaccination status, outdoor visitation is required when the criteria for indoor visits within the residence are not possible due to this policy.
- These visits should occur in an outdoor area agreed upon by the provider with sufficient space and seating to allow individuals who have not been residing together to be at least six feet apart. This could be on the property of the home or in a public setting (such as a park) that is not over-crowded.



# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- Visitation Requirements, regardless of type:
  - ✦ All visits must be scheduled in advance.
  - ✦ Generally, visits shall be limited to two visitors at any one time.
  - ✦ The provider may place **reasonable** limits on the duration, time of day and days of the week visits may take place. This is to ensure all residents have the opportunity to engage in indoor visitation if they choose, **not to limit visitation**.
  - ✦ Each person participating in a visit must adhere to the protocols described in [Screening in Residential and Congregate Day Program Settings](#).
  - ✦ Visitors and residents are **not** required to be vaccinated to engage in a visit.

# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- Visitation Requirements, regardless of type:
  - Physical distancing (being at least 6 feet apart) is still recommended between the visitor and resident being visited. *However*, it is acknowledged that there is no substitute for physical contact.
  - Therefore, and regardless of vaccination status, the resident can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting facemask (if tolerated).
  - Regardless, visitors should physically distance from other residents and staff in the residence.

# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- Visitation Requirements, regardless of type:
  - Each person participating in a visit (resident and visitor) must wear a face covering. It is understood that the resident may not tolerate wearing a face covering or it may not be medically advisable for them to wear one.
  - Visits will occur in an area designated by the provider, and visitor movement within the residence will be limited to that area as much as possible.
  - After a visit in a space controlled by the provider concludes, the provider shall clean and disinfect the area that visitors were in contact with.

# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- Visitation Requirements, regardless of type:
  - To the best of their knowledge no resident, current staff of the home, or person(s) planning to visit have been in close contact (15 or more cumulative minutes within 24-hours) within the last 14 days with someone who recently tested positive for COVID-19.
  - All visitors are required to monitor themselves for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for at least 14 days after the visit. If symptoms occur, advise them to self-isolate at home until they contact their healthcare provider for guidance on isolation, and to immediately notify the provider of the date they visited. The provider should immediately screen the resident who had contact.

# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- Other Types of Visits:

- Regardless of a resident's vaccination status, a group home resident or their guardian may request an off-site visit with a family member or friend, such as an overnight visit to a family member's home or other daytime outing.
- The resident **will not have to isolate upon return** to the residential setting **unless** he or she, or the person returning them from their visit, report **exposure (15 or more cumulative minutes within 24-hours) to someone with actively positive for COVID-19.**
- When considering a visit the guidance referenced in this policy, including [Guardian Consent for Visitation During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), shall be considered.

# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- Important Note:
  - According to the [CDC](#), fully vaccinated residents of non-healthcare congregate settings (**e.g., group homes**) should continue to quarantine for 14 days and be tested for COVID-19 following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Therefore, if there is a reported exposure (not an assumed exposure just for going on a visit) a 14-day isolation period will apply for group home residents.

# Residential Visitation Guidance

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- For visits to occur, there are three levels of attestation/consent required:
  - The Residential Provider must complete, sign (including the signature of a witness), and email a **new** Provider Attestation for Visitation to [dhs.ool@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:dhs.ool@dhs.nj.gov) before visits begin as early as March 19, 2021.
  - The individual, or their guardian if they have one, is required to sign a **new** Guardian Consent for Visitation During the COVID-19 Pandemic.
  - Each visitor must sign the **new** Visitor Agreement before meeting with the resident.

# Day Program Re-Opening

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- The Division is pleased to release updated day program re-opening guidance.
  - Day program re-opening and capacity are governed by:
    - ✦ The most recent New Jersey Department of Health [COVID-19 Activity Level Index \(CALI\)](#).
    - ✦ Congregate Day Program Re-Opening Requirements being met.
  - Day programs meeting the above criteria may open no sooner than Monday, March 29, 2021. Some programs may need longer to re-open.
  - State Supplemental Day Payments will continue.



# Day Program Re-Opening

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- COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI)
  - The CALI Report provides data on COVID-19 transmission risk in New Jersey by six regions.
  - Each region is assigned a level. The region where the day program is located is the metric used, *not the region where participants reside*.
  - This report is posted on Thursdays and uses Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) dates, which are from Sunday to Saturday.
  - MMWR dates are commonly used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to standardize weekly reporting across years.

# Day Program Re-Opening

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- COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI).
  - There are four levels that can be assigned to a region:
    - ✦ Low (Green) – Program remains open or re-opens if previously closed. Capacity can be up to **50%**.
    - ✦ Moderate (Yellow) – Programs may choose to close, stay closed, remain open, or re-open. Programs that elect to remain open or re-open must inform participants that the county is currently designated as *Moderate* and that there is increased risk of COVID-19 transmission. Capacity can be up to **50%**.
    - ✦ High (Orange) or Very High (Red) – Programs must close within 48 hours of region being designated as such. Participant notification is required.

# Day Program Re-Opening

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- How to check the CALI Report (Updated each Thursday).
  - Visit <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>
- Click on the link for the latest report.

## Statistics, Reports & Publications

COVID-19 Weekly CALI Reports

Influenza-like Illness Weekly Reports

Vector-borne Surveillance Reports

Reportable Disease Statistics

Animal Rabies Statistics

Immunization Status/Exemption Reports

Publications

## COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI) Weekly Reports

The COVID-19 Weekly Activity Report provides data on COVID-19 transmission risk by six regions. This report is posted on Thursdays and uses Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) dates, which are from Sunday to Saturday. MMWR dates are commonly used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to standardize weekly reporting across years.


### Weekly COVID-19 Activity Reports 2020-2021

- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 9 \(MMWR week ending March 6, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 8 \(MMWR week ending February 27, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 7 \(MMWR week ending February 20, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 6 \(MMWR week ending February 13, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 5 \(MMWR week ending February 6, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 4 \(MMWR week ending January 30, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 3 \(MMWR week ending January 23, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 2 \(MMWR week ending January 16, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 1 \(MMWR week ending January 9, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 53 \(MMWR week ending January 2, 2021\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 52 \(MMWR week ending December 26, 2020\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 51 \(MMWR week ending December 19, 2020\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Activity Report Week 50 \(MMWR week ending December 12, 2020\)](#)

# Day Program Re-Opening

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- Current COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI).
  - Green and Yellow regions may re-open at **50%** capacity.
  - Orange and Red regions must remain closed.

 Low       Moderate       High       Very High



**March 6, 2021**

Region <sup>2</sup>	Current Activity Level
Northwest	HIGH
Northeast	HIGH
Central West	MODERATE
Central East	HIGH
Southwest	MODERATE
Southeast	MODERATE
STATEWIDE	HIGH

# Day Program Re-Opening

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- COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI).
  - Each congregate day services provider is required to regularly monitor the CALI website and take appropriate action based on the level assigned to the region(s) in which they operate.
  - If a region changes from Low (Green) or Moderate (Yellow) to High (Orange) or Very High (Red), the program must close within 48 hours of the region being designated as such. The program must notify participants/families as soon as possible if this occurs.

# Day Program Re-Opening

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- Ventilation
  - A new section on ventilation has been added.
  - These are *considerations* that day program providers should review. They are not *requirements*.
- Participant group sizes remain limited to 15.
- To the extent practical, the same staff shall be assigned to care for the same group each day.

# Day Program Re-Opening

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- Face masks and PPE are still required. It is recognized that some participants may not tolerate a face covering. However, providers should still encourage them to be worn.
- Social distancing, handwashing, disinfection procedures, screening of participants and staff are all still required.

# Day Program Re-Opening

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- Congregate Day Program Re-Opening Requirements

- Required Documentation:

- ★ Individual Needs and Risk Assessment - This form has received **updates** to COVID-19 content that need to be shared with the participant/family/guardian. If one has been completed previously then it must be reviewed and updated with the family.
- ★ Facility Readiness Tool - There are minor **updates** to this form. If one has been completed previously then it must be reviewed and updated if necessary.



# Day Program Re-Opening

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- Congregate Day Program Re-Opening Requirements
  - Required Documentation Continued:
    - ★ A **new** Congregate Day Re-Opening Attestation is needed – one Attestation form is to be used for each location that is opened.
    - ★ **New** Receipt of COVID-19 Information Form - This form has been updated so a new one must be signed.

# Changes that Apply to Day and Residential

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- Regardless of vaccination status, if a staff member or individual tests positive for COVID-19, they cannot return to day program until the criteria for lifting transmission based precautions and home isolation have been met **and** they have been cleared to end isolation by a healthcare professional.
- The facility shall require a doctor's note before re-admission.

# Changes that Apply to Day and Residential

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- Fully vaccinated staff who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and who are asymptomatic do **not** need to be restricted from work for 14 days following their exposure.
  - Asymptomatic staff who have recovered from COVID-19 infection in the prior 3 months should follow the same guidance.
  - At this time, people are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 2 or more weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or 2 or more weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).

# Changes that Apply to Day and Residential

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- Following a COVID-19 exposure (15 or more cumulative minutes within 24-hours with someone who recently tested positive for COVID-19), the following staff must continue to isolate for 14 days:
  - Fully vaccinated staff who have underlying immunocompromising conditions.
  - Staff who have not been vaccinated.
- Screening in Residential and Congregate Day Program Settings has been updated.

# Changes that Apply to Day and Residential

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- Regardless of vaccination status or living arrangement, an individual who has been exposed (15 or more cumulative minutes within 24-hours with someone who has recently tested positive for COVID-19) cannot return to program for 14 days following the last day of that exposure.
- This is because these settings serve individuals who may not tolerate a mask or regularly socially distance **and** the duration of the vaccine's protection and its ability to protect against new COVID-19 variants are still under investigation

# Important Resources

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- Disability Rights New Jersey
  - 1-800-922-7233 (toll-free in New Jersey only)
- Ombudsman for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and their Families
  - 1-609-984-7764
- New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities
  - 1-800-792-8858

# Important Resources

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- For assistance during this time:
  - For issues, call the Division Community Services office for your county or 1 (800) 832-9173.
  - When calling, you will be connected with the Division's answering service who will take information about the circumstance and have a Division staff person reach out.
  - For routine questions: [DDD.FeeForService@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.FeeForService@dhs.nj.gov)
  - For COVID-related questions: [DDD.COVID-19@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:DDD.COVID-19@dhs.nj.gov)
  - To report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation: call 1 (800) 832-9173, then press 1.

# Highlighted Resources

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- For individuals, families and caregivers
  - [Boggs Center COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)
- For individuals:
  - NJ Self-Advocacy Project's [Stay Healthy at Home Webinar Series](#)
- For Direct Support Professionals
  - [National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals \(NADSP\) COVID-19 Toolkit for DSPs](#)
  - [CDC Guidance for Direct Service Providers](#)