



## CORE INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION STRATEGIES



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**Purpose:** To provide a succinct reference of regulations and suggested strategies to be employed by schools in Trumbull County, to “...help communities and individuals make decisions based on their local context and their unique needs.”<sup>1</sup>

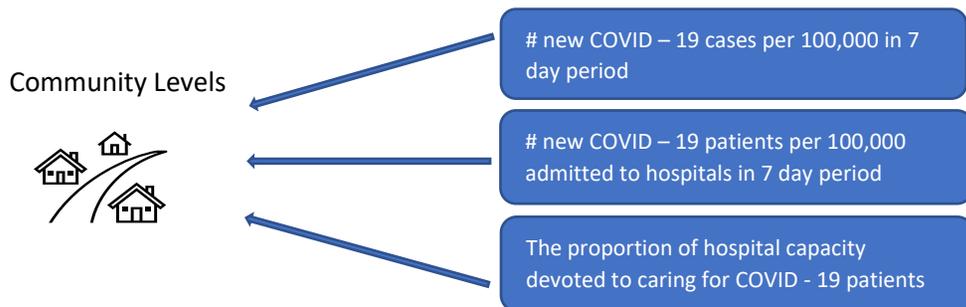
These strategies provide:

1. **flexibility** to local schools to adapt to local conditions.
2. **equity** toward those groups that are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

#### 1.0 Covid-19 Community Levels

Strategies are tied to COVID-19 Community Levels, to “...help communities and individuals make decisions based on their local context and their unique needs.”<sup>1</sup>

Community levels are determined by a data set consisting of the following<sup>2</sup>:



Specifically, the level is determined by the higher of the *new admissions* and *inpatient beds occupied* metrics, based on the current level of *new cases per 100,000 population in the past 7 days*.

1. TABLE 1 (p. 9) illustrates how the three metrics are factored to determine the Community Levels: The Community Levels for Trumbull County may be determined by using the CDC's online tool<sup>2</sup>: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>
2. TABLE 2 (pp. 10-12) suggests strategies to be employed during specific community levels. Simply determine the current community level, then take the corresponding actions.

The following general strategies are always recommended, regardless of community levels:

## **2.0 Operational Strategies**

- 1. Staying up to date on vaccinations**
- 2. Provide information**
- 3. Support policies and practices that facilitate prevention and mitigation.**
- 4. Maintain a physical environment that mitigates the spread of viruses.**

### **2.1 Staying up to date on vaccinations<sup>3</sup>**

1. Encourage students and their families to stay current with vaccinations and do everything you can to facilitate them.
2. Encourage parents to diligently maintain their children's vaccination cards.

### **2.2 Provide information**

1. Keep the students current on the latest COVID prevention and mitigation strategies that they can practice.
2. Ensure they understand the information you provide, including those who are non-English speaking and students with disabilities.
3. Educate them about vaccines: who, what, where, when, and why. Express and encourage trust and confidence in vaccines. Staff should be alert for opportunities to demonstrate that confidence to their students.

## **3.0 Support policies and practices that prevent and mitigate.**

1. Provide workplace vaccinations when possible.
2. Provide or at least facilitate diagnostic testing: lab-based, point-of-care RAPID, and self-testing (EVA) with "at-home" kits.

3. Have P.T.O. policies and practices that take COVID into consideration. Maintain a supportive culture, with no repercussions, stigma, or “pressure” to come to school. “When in doubt, stay home.”
4. Routine contact tracing and case investigation are not recommended for schools unless there is an outbreak. If one does occur, or there is a “cluster” of cases, please contact Charles at the TCCHD if you would like some assistance with your contact tracing, at (330) 980-1263.

### **3.1 Personal Hygiene**

1. Allow times for handwashing (especially at key times – after lunch, using the restroom, recess, sneezing, and coughing, for instance).<sup>4</sup>
2. Ensure there are adequate supplies of soap and hand towels or operational hand drying machines.
3. In the absence of access to soap and water, provide hand sanitizer with at 60 percent alcohol content.
4. All students, teachers, and staff cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.<sup>5</sup>

### **3.2 Cleaning and disinfecting<sup>6</sup>**

1. Clean surfaces at least 1x per day.
2. Clean and disinfect an area where there has been somebody with COVID symptoms, or who has tested positive for COVID, within the previous 24 hours.

### **3.3 Masking<sup>7</sup>**

1. Support any person, teacher, staff, or student, who wants to wear a mask for any reason.
2. When the community infection level is “high”, the CDC advises that every person in the school wear a mask. Those at risk should wear N95 or KN95 masks.
3. Reasonable accommodations should be provided for at-risk students. At-risk students are to not be segregated.
4. Alternative strategies for children under 2 years old, and those who are hard to mask due to disabilities, include: cohorting, improved ventilation, reduced crowding, screening testing, and avoiding higher-risk activities.

**High Risk:**

1. Schools should consider screen-testing all individuals engaged in high-risk activities, regardless of the community level.
2. Consider temporarily suspending operations of high-risk activities during community outbreaks.
3. Consider masking, to the extent it is practical for the given activity.

**3.4 Protocols for those who test positive for COVID-19 or are exposed to those who test positive**

**IF A STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER TESTS POSITIVE OR IS EXPOSED WHILE AT SCHOOL OR INVOLVED IN A SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITY, PLEASE FOLLOW THE PROTOCOLS THAT ARE EXPLAINED IN FIGURE 2 (pp. 16-18).**

**3.5 Isolation and Quarantine<sup>8</sup>**

Definitions:

*Isolation – to segregate those with suspected or confirmed COVID infection from the general population.*

*Quarantine – to separate and restrict the movement of those who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.*

If a child at school has COVID symptoms or has been in close contact with somebody who had symptoms:

1. He or she should be fitted with a well-fitting mask and be sent home.
2. His or her parent(s) or guardian(s) should be encouraged to have the student diagnostically tested if the school doesn't have tests on hand. If the school does have them, it can administer the tests on-site, or send them home with the symptomatic child.

School leadership should clearly articulate the following to affected children and their parents:

1. Those with positive symptoms or positive test results should isolate for a minimum of 5 days, followed by 5 days of wearing a mask when in public or at home around other people
2. Students and staff who are high-risk may be able to utilize Test-to-Treat locations, which are one stop for diagnosis and treatment of high high-risk individuals<sup>9</sup>:

[COVID-19 Test to Treat Locator English \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

Those who were exposed to someone who had symptoms or tested positive, but do not themselves have symptoms:

1. Should wear a mask for 10 days after the last date of exposure. Schools should make parents aware of this recommendation. However, you no longer enforce it against those who do not comply.
2. If symptoms develop during this time, isolate and get tested for symptoms of COVID-19.

### **3.6 Diagnostic Testing<sup>10</sup>**

#### **Viral Tests**

1. Laboratory-based (NAAT) – Nucleic Acid Amplification Test
2. Point-of-Care Rapid testing (Antigen, some NAATS)
3. Self-testing.

#### **Antibody or Serology test**

Used for research and is NOT to be used for diagnostic purposes.

##### **3.6.1 Some Test Resource Options:**

1. Survey Monkey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9QYTHVD>
2. Thermo-Fisher *ReadyCheckGo* Program<sup>12</sup> (in partnership with the State of Ohio)
3. Midwest COVID-19 Testing Coordination Center<sup>13</sup>

### **4.0 Environmental Considerations<sup>12</sup>**

#### **4.1 Spacing**

CDC recommends desks and persons remain 3 feet apart if masked, and 6 feet if not masked.

#### **4.2 Ventilation:**

1. Upgrade, improve, and repair system to reduce spread of germs and contaminants.
2. Money is available through the Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Program, Governor's Emergency Education Relief Program, and Head Start and Child Care American Rescue Plan.

3. Consider using portable air cleaners, HEPA filters, and doing group activities outside, when possible.
4. Use the CDC Interactive School Ventilation Tool, if you find it to be useful: [Interactive School Ventilation Tool | CDC](#)<sup>13</sup>

## **5.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

If you need information or assistance at any time, please contact Charles Burger, school liaison at the TCCHD, at (330) 980-1263. You also may COVID-19 FAQ's page:

[Frequently Asked Questions | COVID-19 \(ohio.gov\)](#)

## **REFERENCES**

1. [Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning | CDC](#)
2. [COVID-19 Community Levels | CDC](#)
3. [Immunization | Ohio Department of Health](#)
4. [When and How to Wash Your Hands | Handwashing | CDC](#)
5. [Coughing and Sneezing | Etiquette & Practice | Hygiene | Healthy Water | CDC](#)
6. [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility | CDC](#)
7. [Use and Care of Masks | CDC](#)
8. [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation | CDC](#)
9. [COVID-19 Test to Treat Locator English \(arcgis.com\)](#)
10. [Test for Current Infection | CDC](#)
11. [Ventilation in Schools and ChildCare Programs \(cdc.gov\)](#)
12. <https://www.thermofisher.com/readychckgo/us/en/school-testing-program.html>
13. [Midwest Coordination Center - COVID Testing \(testedandprotected.org\)](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions for K-12 and Early Care and Education \(ECE\) Settings: Information for School and ECE Administrators, Teachers, Staff, and Parents | CDC](#)

**TABLE 1**

COVID-19 Community Levels

<b>COVID-19 Community Levels – Use the Highest Level that Applies to Your Community</b>				
<b>New COVID-19 Cases</b>				
<b>Per 100,000 people in the past 7 days</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Fewer than 200</b>	New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total)	<10.0	10.0-19.9	≥20.0
	Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)	<10.0%	10.0-14.9%	≥15.0%
<b>200 or more</b>	New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total)	NA	<10.0	≥10.0
	Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)	NA	<10.0%	≥10.0%

**The COVID-19 community level is determined by the higher of the new admissions and inpatient beds metrics, based on the current level of new cases per 100,000 population in the past 7 days**

To find out the COVID-19 community level:

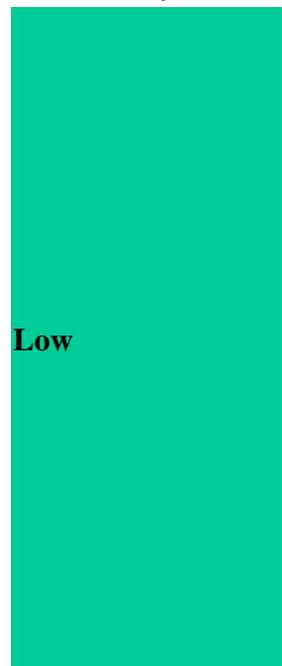
- First determine whether a county, state, or territory has fewer than 200 new cases per 100,000 people in the past 7 days or 200 new cases or more per 100,000 people in the past 7 days.
- Then, determine the level (low, medium, or high) for the new admissions and inpatient beds and indicators using the scale for the area’s number for new cases.
- The COVID-19 Community Level is based on the higher of the new admissions and inpatient beds metrics

**TABLE 2**

**COVID-19  
Community Level**

**Individual- and household-level prevention behaviors**

**Community-level prevention strategies (as recommended by state or local authorities)**



**Low**

- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters
- Maintain improved ventilation throughout indoor spaces when possible
- Follow CDC recommendations for isolation and quarantine, including getting tested if you are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19
- If you are immunocompromised or [high risk](#) for severe disease
  - Have a plan for rapid testing if needed (e.g., having home tests or access to testing)
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for treatments like oral antivirals, PrEP, and monoclonal antibodies

- Distribute and administer vaccines to achieve high community vaccination coverage and ensure health equity
- Maintain improved ventilation in public indoor spaces
- Ensure access to testing, including through point-of-care and at-home tests for all people
  - Communicate with organizations and places that serve people who are immunocompromised or at [high risk](#) for severe disease to ensure they know how to get rapid testing
- Ensure access and equity in vaccination, testing, treatment, community outreach, support services for disproportionately affected populations



**Medium**

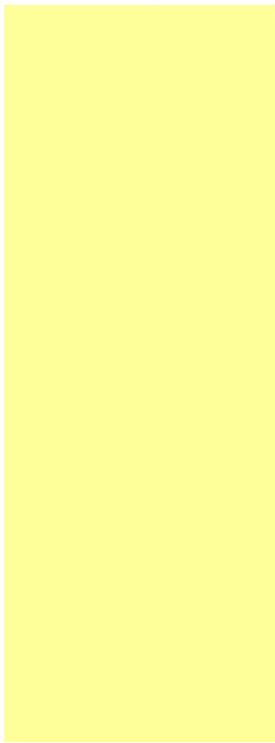
- If you are immunocompromised or [high risk](#) for severe disease
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions (e.g., testing)
  - Have a plan for rapid testing if needed (e.g., having home tests or access to testing)

- Protect people at [high risk](#) for severe illness or death by ensuring equitable access to vaccination, testing, treatment, support services, and information
- Consider implementing screening testing or other testing strategies for people who are exposed to COVID-19 in workplaces, schools, or other community settings as appropriate

**COVID-19  
Community Level**

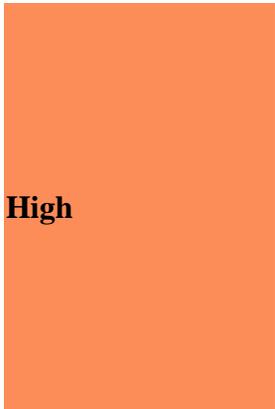
**Individual- and household-level prevention behaviors**

**Community-level prevention strategies (as recommended by state or local authorities)**



- Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for treatments like oral antivirals, PrEP, and monoclonal antibodies
- If you have household or social contact with someone at [high risk](#) for severe disease
  - consider self-testing to detect infection before contact
  - consider wearing a mask when indoors with them
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters
- Maintain improved ventilation throughout indoor spaces when possible
- Follow CDC recommendations for isolation and quarantine, including getting tested if you are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19

- Implement enhanced prevention measures in high-risk congregate settings (see guidance for [correctional facilities](#) and [homeless shelters](#))
- Distribute and administer vaccines to achieve high community vaccination coverage and ensure health equity
- Maintain improved ventilation in public indoor spaces
- Ensure access to testing, including through point-of-care and at-home tests for all people
- Communicate with organizations and places that serve people who are immunocompromised or at [high risk](#) for severe disease to ensure they know how to get rapid testing
- Ensure access and equity in vaccination, testing, treatment, community outreach, support services for disproportionately affected populations



**High**

- Wear a well-fitting mask<sup>1</sup> indoors in public, regardless of vaccination status (including in K-12 schools and other indoor community settings)
- If you are immunocompromised or [high risk](#) for severe disease
  - Wear a [mask or respirator](#) that provides you with greater protection
  - Consider avoiding non-essential indoor activities in public where you could be exposed

- Consider setting-specific recommendations for prevention strategies based on local factors
- Implement healthcare surge support as needed
- Protect people at [high risk](#) for severe illness or death by ensuring equitable access to vaccination, testing, treatment, support services, and information
- Consider implementing screening testing or other testing strategies for people who are exposed to COVID-19 in workplaces, schools, or other community settings as appropriate

**COVID-19  
Community Level**

**Individual- and household-level prevention behaviors**

- Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to take other precautions (e.g., testing)
- Have a plan for rapid testing if needed (e.g., having home tests or access to testing)
- Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for treatments like oral antivirals, PrEP, and monoclonal antibodies
- If you have household or social contact with someone at [high risk](#) for severe disease
  - consider self-testing to detect infection before contact
  - consider wearing a mask when indoors with them
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters
- Maintain improved ventilation throughout indoor spaces when possible
- Follow CDC recommendations for isolation and quarantine, including getting tested if you are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19

**Community-level prevention strategies (as recommended by state or local authorities)**

- Implement enhanced prevention measures in high-risk congregate settings (see guidance for [correctional facilities](#) and [homeless shelters](#))
- Distribute and administer vaccines to achieve high community vaccination coverage and ensure health equity
- Maintain improved ventilation in public indoor spaces
- Ensure access to testing, including through point-of-care and at-home tests for all people
  - Communicate with organizations and places that serve people who are immunocompromised or at [high risk](#) for severe disease to ensure they know how to get rapid testing
- Ensure access and equity in vaccination, testing, treatment, community outreach, support services for disproportionately affected populations

**<sup>1</sup> At all levels, people can wear a mask based on personal preference, informed by personal level of risk. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask**

**FIGURE 1**



Aug. 12, 2022

To our K-12 school partners,

As the new school year begins, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) would like to share updated recommendations for ongoing prevention of COVID-19 spread in schools. These steps will help keep students, staff, and your communities safe, while also keeping students learning in the classroom throughout the year.

**Right now, most Ohio communities are experiencing high levels of community spread following a summer surge in cases. While cases have increased, the good news is hospitalizations remain lower compared to past surges, especially those resulting in ICU admission.**

Thankfully, we are in a much better position to protect students and staff from severe outcomes from COVID-19 as we begin this new school year. We now have much stronger immune resistance stemming from a combination of vaccines and prior illness. We have access to COVID-19 vaccines for children as young as 6 months. We also have widespread access to treatments proven to reduce the risk of serious illness and hospitalization for our most vulnerable Ohioans, including staff and family members of students who are more vulnerable to severe illness based on their age or medical conditions.

ODH has worked collaboratively with our local health departments, communities, and schools across the state to help minimize COVID-19 spread in schools during the last three school years. Our guidance regarding how best to keep our students safe, healthy, and in school continues to evolve.

On Aug. 11, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its guidance](#) on how people can protect themselves and others from COVID-19, what actions to take if exposed to COVID-19, and what actions to take if you have symptoms or test positive with the virus.

As a result, ODH is updating its guidance for Ohio K-12 schools and recommending the CDC's general guidance to best protect Ohio's students in the school setting.

- First, because contact tracing and case investigation has shifted to focus on high-risk environments, such as long-term care facilities and healthcare settings, ODH is no longer recommending the [Mask to Stay, Test to Play](#) quarantine alternative for schools.
- Instead, ODH recommends schools follow [general isolation procedures from the CDC](#) for confirmed cases. If students or staff feel sick or suspect they might have COVID-19, they should stay home and take a rapid test. If positive, students and staff should stay home from school for at least 5 days and longer if necessary, until fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication) and symptoms are improving. Additionally, after isolation ends, students and staff should continue to take precautions as they resume normal activities by wearing a mask for 5 days (or after two negative tests 48 hours apart).

In addition, we recommend schools work closely with their local health department to monitor community spread and make decisions about the best measures to protect students and staff based on what is happening in your community.

#### Tests for K-12 schools

As schools start heading back into session over the coming weeks, our COVID-19 testing team wants to assure you that we have rapid tests available for K-12 schools. We have started to use a [SurveyMonkey tool](#) that schools can use to submit orders. We are allowing schools to request different test types based on their intended use (e.g., on-site vs. at-home administration), and the ordering tool provides some guidance about different potential uses for the different tests. Please feel free to utilize this tool and plan for when your schools might need tests.

In addition to the rapid antigen testing options that can be requested directly from ODH, there are PCR testing options available as well that are a good option for schools that want to implement regular surveillance testing. The Midwest COVID-19 Testing Coordination Center operated by Battelle provides free PCR testing solutions for schools that are interested in this approach. In addition, Ohio has a partnership with Thermo Fisher Scientific to offer its ReadyCheckGo school testing program to Ohio schools at no cost. You can reach out to either of these great partners directly, or contact us at [TestingRequests@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:TestingRequests@odh.ohio.gov) for more information.

#### Resources for K-12 schools

- [CDC: Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19](#)
- [CDC: Community Levels](#)
- [CDC: Community Levels by County](#)
- [ODH: What to Do if You Have COVID-19](#)
- [ODH: How schools can request COVID-19 tests](#)

Thank you for your continued partnership and your efforts to keep students and staff safe, healthy, and in the classroom this school year.

For more information, visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

**Sincerely,**



Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA

Director of Health

Ohio Department of Health

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## Figure 2

### NEW (8/12/22) CDC K-12 Guidance Strategies for Everyday Operations

#### 1. Stay Up to Date on Vaccinations

- Schools, along with their local health district, should promote individuals staying up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations by providing routine information and offering clinics.

#### 2. Stay at Home When You are Sick

- Anyone who is exhibiting COVID like symptoms should stay at home.
- Symptomatic individuals should be tested.
- Develop non-punitive policies for employees and students to stay at home when they have symptoms.

#### 3. Improving Ventilation

- Schools should maximize ventilation, airflow and air quality as much as possible.
- Schools should install MERV-13 air filters, or consider portable air cleaners.
- Schools may consider upper-room ultraviolet systems.

#### 4. Promoting Hand Hygiene

- Schools should routinely promote the importance of proper handwashing, especially before and after meals, restroom use and recess.
- When handwashing is not readily available, supply and promote the use of hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Promote individuals to cover their nose and mouth when they cough or sneeze.

#### 5. Environmental Cleaning

- Schools should clean and sanitize surfaces at least once per day.

#### 6. COVID-19 Community Levels and its Associated Prevention Strategies

- Schools should review the CDC community levels weekly, and discuss them with their local health district.

- Schools should consider the use of the suggested prevention strategies associated with each level if the school is experiencing an outbreak of COVID, or has high absenteeism, or for high-risk activities.

## 7. Masking

- The CDC recommends the use of universal indoor masking in schools when the county COVID-19 community level tanking is high.
- CDC also recommends masking at all times in healthcare settings, including the school nurse's station.
- CDC also recommends that individuals with a known exposure to a COVID positive person mask for 10 days from the first date of exposure.
- Individuals who are immunocompromised should wear a mask and schools must make accommodations to protect immunocompromised persons in school.

New CDC K-12 Guidance Strategies for Everyday Operations – August 2022 Page 1 of 2

## 8. Testing

- Diagnostic testing should be offered in the school for students and staff that have symptoms, or who were known to be exposed, or recommend that they be tested at a community-testing site.
- Schools should promote the use of home test kits to parents so they may screen their child prior to coming to school or sports activities with symptoms.
- **Screening Testing**
  - Schools may choose to develop a testing protocol for individuals during high CDC community levels, during large gatherings, activities with close contact or returning from breaks.

## 9. Management of Cases & Exposures (i.e. Isolation & Quarantine)

- If someone develops symptoms in the school setting, or arrives at school with symptoms, you should have them put on a tight-fitting mask and send them home. If they cannot go home, you should isolate them. You should also encourage testing.
- A positive case must still isolate at home for 5 days and can return on day 6, if their symptoms are improving and they wear a tight-fitting mask for days 6-10. No testing to return is required; however, if they take 2 antigen tests - 48 hours apart, starting on day 6, and they are both negative, they may return without a mask.
- Exposed persons to a positive case are no longer required to quarantine; however, it is recommended that they wear a mask for 10 days. That is for them to do themselves; you do not need to enforce it.

- Mask to stay/test to play is revoked, so you do not need to test exposed persons for sports.

10. **Consideration for Priorities Strategies**

- When considering these strategies, you need to consider factors such as age, persons with disabilities, the risk of persons that may become seriously ill, equity to disproportionately affect groups, availability of resources (funding, personnel, etc.), the acceptance of the community served and pediatric-specific considerations.