



# COVID-19 Testing in Early Ed

Since December 2020, Neighborhood Villages has implemented a multi-layered COVID 19 testing protocol for more than 500 Early Educators and Out of School Time providers. Based on lessons learned from 3 separate pilots, they worked with Veritas Lab to design a pooled testing protocol specifically to meet the needs of schools and early education providers statewide.

**Here's how they do it.**

## LAYERED TESTING APPROACH



The pilot uses a layered approach, with a focus on weekly pooled screening tests and access to symptomatic individual PCR tests.

1

### Baseline Testing

Neighborhood Villages oversaw baseline testing operational logistics

2

### Weekly Screening Testing

BCRI participating organizations carry out weekly pooled testing onsite. Test kits include a saliva straw, collection tube with bar code number, alcohol wipe, and tube bag.

3

### Symptomatic Testing

Educators in the BCRI have access to symptomatic testing (with 48 hour results) each weekday from 4-5 PM at Boston Community Pediatrics.

4

### Rapid Response Testing

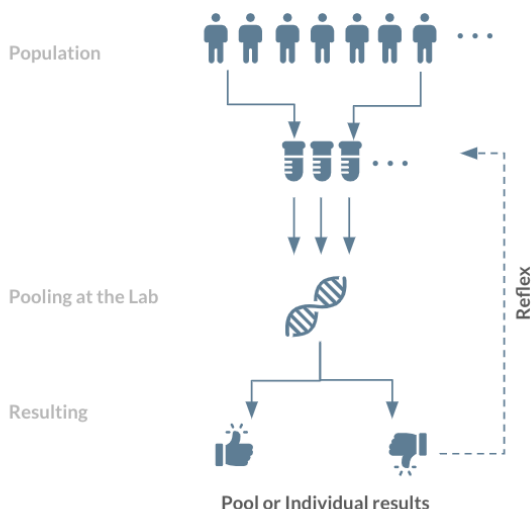
Rapid antigen tests are utilized by one site as needed, as an extra layer of caution.

## CURRENT VENDOR

### Veritas



Pooled Saliva RT-PCR Test with automatic retesting using the SalivaDirect protocol.



**List price:** \$50/pool of 5-10 specimens and \$25/person for follow-up tests in the case of a positive pool

## WEEKLY TESTING LOGISTICS: VERITAS

One-Time: Participants enroll in the Veritas portal, which registers them for testing each week and ensures they can access test results.



### Self Saliva Sample Collection

Staff pick up testing kit, write name and date of birth on the tube, and self-collect saliva samples in designated testing room, and bring to Testing Coordinator.



### Registration

Testing Coordinator registers the sample by scanning QR code on the sample tube on their phone.



### Getting Samples to the lab

Testing Coordinator drops off samples at regional hub site or participating pharmacy. Courier service picks up all samples from hub site by 3pm and delivers directly to the lab.



### Results Returned

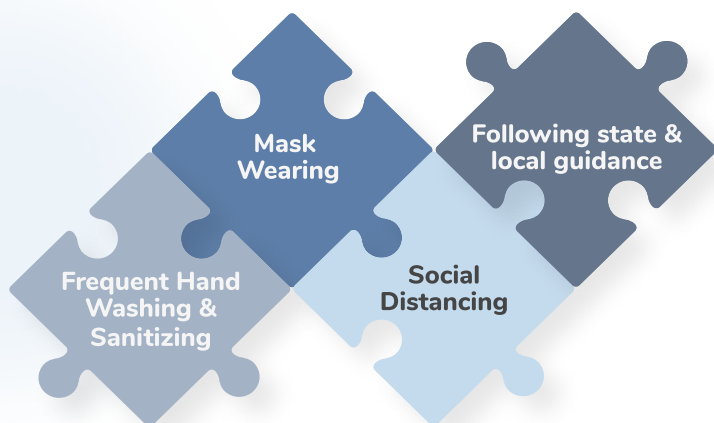
Pool results are delivered directly to Program Administrators through web portal. In the case of a positive pool, individual results are returned to each of the individuals in the positive pool. Individuals are responsible for informing Program Administrators of their result.



## WHAT WE LEARNED

- **Accurate, individualized results are key for childcare.** In small childcare programs, a false positive or a positive pool could shut down a program for several days unnecessarily.
- **Solutions that minimize burdens on schools and childcare centers are better for all schools, but critical for childcare.**  
The pandemic has only exacerbated the ongoing child care staffing crisis, leaving little capacity for coordination and logistics of a testing protocol.
- **Investment in centralized coordination and operations support is critical for early education.** Childcare centers lack the centralized infrastructure of a school district that is available in the K-12 sector. Neighborhood Villages supports childcare centers by implementing centralized onboarding, operations, and logistics.

## REGULAR TESTING IS JUST ONE PIECE OF THE COVID SAFETY PUZZLE



## KEY PARTNERS

### Leadership and Management:

- Neighborhood Villages

### Funding:

- The Boston Children's Relief Initiative (BCRI)

### Pilot Design:

- Neighborhood Villages
- Experts from MIT, UC Berkeley, BCP

### Clinical Partner:

- Boston Community Pediatrics (BCP)

## PAST VENDORS

### • Ginkgo Bioworks



Baseline individual PCR testing via saliva sample & rapid antigen testing.

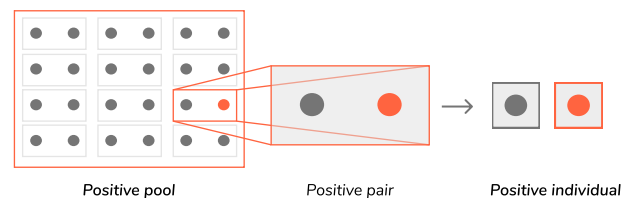


**Individual PCR list price:** \$75 per test  
**Rapid antigen test price:** \$20 per test (\$15 if you buy 600+ at one time)

### • Mirimus



Pooled Saliva RT-PCR Test. Pool sizes are flexible and in the event of a positive result, samples are tested in pairs and then positive pairs are tested individually using the SalivaDirect protocol.



**List price:** \$360/pool of up to 24 specimens. \$40/person for follow-up test in the case of a positive pool.  
**Shipping:** \$50 overnight per box every week

### • JCMA



Pooled RT-PCR Test via AN swab. Samples are pooled at lab into pools of 18 samples and, in the event of a positive result, the samples are automatically retested for individual results.



**List price:** \$17 per person tested, inclusive of follow-up test cost in the case of a positive pool

### Pilot Sites:

- East Boston Social Center
- Ellis
- Epiphany
- For Kids Only Afterschool
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Horizons for Homeless
- Nurturey
- The Community Group
- Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
- United South End Settlements

Based on the Neighborhood Villages BCRI Covid-19 Testing Pilot. Prepared by Covid-19 Response Advisors.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.neighborhoodvillages.org/testing-approaches-to-covid19-testing>

[www.covidresponseadvisors.org](http://www.covidresponseadvisors.org)