

SCHOOL REOPENING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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WHY IN PERSON SCHOOLING MATTERS

- Better learning curve
- Helps develop relationships with peers and teachers
- Essential for academic and social learning, especially at the elementary school level
- More opportunities for play and exercise; limits screen time
- Provides nutritious breakfasts and lunches-more than 50% of U.S. families rely on this daily
- Provides physical, mental and therapeutic services to millions of students annually
- Opened schools are necessary for parents to re-enter the work force



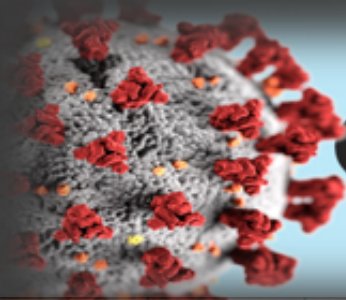
Lower income families and minorities will suffer the most if schools are locked down-
No digital access, food insecurity, lack of adult support and development
inappropriateness.

SUSCEPTIBILITY OF CHILDREN TO THE COVID-19 VIRUS-THE SCIENCE IS STILL UNCLEAR

- Children under 18 years of age make up 22% of the U.S. population and account for only less than 2% of positive infections.
- Worldwide data reveals evidence that children are less susceptible to becoming infected than adults, as well as less likely to spread the virus.
- Rate of getting the infection increases with age-with the exception of children less than 1 year of age.
- In households, less than 10% of children were primary spreaders.
- Studies show that the virus spreads more effectively from adult to adult than children to children.

CLINICAL OUTCOMES OF CHILDREN WITH COVID-19

- Children and adolescents are less likely to have symptoms or severe disease.
- COVID-19 virus behaves differently from other common respiratory viruses, like influenza.
- Rare complication of the COVID-19 virus: “MIS-C” or “Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children”; presents with fever, lab evidence of inflammation and often myocarditis and shock. These patients required ICU care and the vast majority recovered.



COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

OUTCOMES OF SCHOOLS RE-OPENING



- Based on worldwide data, it seems that schools do not appear to have played a major role in COVID-19 community transmission. However, a large outbreak occurred in Israel- students were middle and high school aged. The index cases attended school while symptomatic and masking/social distancing were not maintained there.
- Prevention of staff to staff transmission is critical.
- Community transmission must be mitigated before re-opening schools.
- Schools must have guidelines in place to identify and isolate new cases.

HARMS TO CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL CLOSURE- LASTING SEQUELAE OF THE PANDEMIC

- **Physical Health: “Pandemic pounds”**
 - rapid weight gains secondary to increased screen time, decreased physical activity, poor sleep habits, boredom and abundance of junk foods in the home
- **Mental Health:**
 - Increased anxiety and depression, especially among teens and preteens, leading to drastic increase in suicides
 - Mental health decline is worse in single parent families and those with younger children
 - Increased domestic violence and child abuse due to rising stress and social isolation
 - Increased parental substance and alcohol abuse leading to further problems
 - Worsening behaviors in children such as irritability, acting out, temper tantrums as well as increasing food insecurities
- **Learning:**
 - Crisis for students with special needs who are unable to access therapeutic services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy
 - Loss of emotional support from school results in poor learning curve
 - Low income and minorities most affected and fall further behind



WHAT SHOULD WE AS PROVIDERS DO, GIVEN THAT WE HAVE IMPERFECT INFORMATION?

- The risks of re-opening schools are uncertain
- However, the harm of staying home is quite clear
- Guidelines must be in place prior to school opening on what to do if an outbreak occurs
- Plans in place for screening, testing and contact tracing



WILL OPENING SCHOOLS LEAD TO A SECOND WAVE?

- We don't know
- Studies worldwide suggest that school re-openings play little role in sustaining COVID-19 pandemic
- No clear role of school transmission affecting the community pandemic



SCHOOLS' PROACTIVE PLAN FOR COVID-19 POSITIVE STUDENTS AND STAFF

- COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM IN PLACE AT EACH SCHOOL
- If a student is found to be ill at school, immediately isolated and must be picked up within 1 hour
- Child gets tested and once identified as positive, DOH notified and contact tracing performed.



FAMILIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SCREENING THEIR OWN CHILDREN DAILY



- Signs of infection: Fever, cough, nose congestion/runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, headache, fatigue, stomach ache, diarrhea and new loss of smell or taste.
- Do not send children to school if they are sick.
- Limitation of symptom screening- it will only identify if a child has an illness.
- Transmission of COVID-19 can still occur in an asymptomatic, pre-symptomatic or mildly symptomatic student.

MOST IMPORTANT ACTION TO TAKE: PROMOTING HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

- Wear a face mask or face covering at all times, except when eating or drinking
- Frequent handwashing and/or sanitizing
- Physical/social distancing of at least 6 feet
- Schools will have “Ohana Bubble” for lower grades and “Cohorts” for the upper grades
- Constant promotion and practice of personal hygiene-Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth which are the main entry points of the virus
- Maintain a clean environment as much as possible with thorough cleaning and disinfecting



CALL TO ACTION FOR PARENTS



- Parents play a key role as schools reopen
- Parents must be a good role model and practice good habits
- Make sure your child is up to date on well child exams and vaccines
- Allow your keiki to express or draw their feeling
- Listen carefully and do not push back or invalidate them
- Be reassuring and remind them that this will not last forever

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL RETURN AS WELL AS BOOSTING YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

- Families can be proactive in preparing for return to school by getting back into schedules and routines before COVID-19 pandemic
- Added benefit- strengthening your immune system to boost the immune response to fight off the virus better
- Strategies for everyone to implement now:
 - Eat a healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables
 - Stay hydrated with water
 - Exercise regularly and start to limit screen time
 - Get back on a regular night routine and bedtime
 - Minimize stress and set aside family time

eat healthy
live healthy
be healthy

MAHALO AND STAY SAFE

