

# NYS AAP–Chapter 3

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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## Press Release School Reopening

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As individual school districts discuss reopening this fall, the New York State American Academy of Pediatrics - Chapter 3, representing over 1,600 pediatricians across Manhattan, Staten Island, the Bronx, Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange and Dutchess, maintains that in-person education in schools remains the best forum for children to learn and thrive.

However, the reopening of schools must be done in a manner that ensures the safety of teachers, staff and students. As schools continue to discuss what measures to take as fall approaches, we await further instruction from the Governor, public health experts and more information related to the local epidemiology related to COVID. Schools are special places for children and provide them with improved opportunities for educational, social and emotional growth and development. For children in poverty or with food insecurity – the numbers of which have risen as a result of the pandemic – schools also provide 2 meals a day to mitigate the effects of child hunger. Continuing to keep children at home has increased the risks of behavioral problems at home and reports of potential child abuse have increased. These benefits must be weighed against the potential increased risk of COVID-19.

As districts proceed in their discussions, the Academy continues to recommend that while the preference is for schools to be open, this recommendation is contingent upon appropriate safety precautions in schools and favorable local epidemiology. We currently recommend that should children return to school, they do so wearing masks, particularly for children of middle and high-school age, and utilize social distancing in classrooms and other school activities to the extent possible. We wholeheartedly endorse the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics, who both call for standardized, preventive health procedures.

Taking basic precautions to reduce the spread of the pandemic will help accelerate a return to normalcy while ensuring our children remain healthy.

To further elaborate on this discussion, please see [our organization's statement on school reopening](#). We will continue to serve as local experts on how to optimize the physical, social, intellectual and emotional health of children.