



DC AAP is the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the national organization of close to 70,000 pediatricians. The D.C. Chapter has over 425 members, including pediatricians, residents and medical students from all of the District's hospitals, community clinics, private practices, and school-based health centers.

DC AAP strongly supports full-time, in-person learning for children and adolescents in the District. Schools and school-supported programs are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction; social and emotional skills; safety; reliable nutrition; physical/occupational/speech therapy; mental health services; health services; and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits.

The District is preparing for the 2021-2022 school year now, to provide safe, quality education to children and adolescents. When weighing risks and benefits, data has shown that the risk of COVID-19 transmission among children and adolescents in the school setting is low. Data also has shown that children younger than 10 years are less likely to become infected and less likely to spread infection to others. Lastly, a safe and effective vaccine is now widely available to children and adolescents 12 years and older. COVID-19 cases continue to decline as immunization rates increase.

The DC AAP strongly advocates having students physically present in school. Virtual, distance-learning should be available only when necessary, to students with certain high-risk medical conditions. Specific, individual medical exemptions to in-person learning should be discussed with a physician.

Conditions that may be considered high-risk are:

- Chronic lung disease, asthma (moderate or severe)
- Diabetes
- Genetic, neurologic, or metabolic conditions
- Heart disease since birth
- Immunosuppression (weakened immune system due to certain medical conditions or being on medications that weaken the immune system)
- Medical complexity (children with multiple chronic conditions that affect many parts of the body, or are dependent on technology and other significant supports for daily life)
- Obesity
- Sickle cell disease

However, most children with medical conditions, even high-risk ones, can safely attend in-person learning with COVID-19 safety precautions in place and regular medical checkups. Children and adolescents, especially those with disabilities that require an Individualized Education Program, particularly benefit from access to in-person learning and related services. DC AAP suggests that clinicians carefully weigh the risks of being out of school as they engage with families to assess overall risks and benefits. In-person learning is fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and should be prioritized.