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PEDIATRICIANS ACROSS CALIFORNIA UNITE TO CALL FOR URGENT AND SAFE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Organizations representing over 5,500 California Pediatricians outline the irreversible damage continued school closures have on students

February 9, 2021--Today, the California chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics joined together—representing over 5,500 pediatricians—urging collaboration for prompt and safe reopening of schools in [letters released this morning](#). Evidence has shown that **safe in-person education for grades TK-12th can be accomplished with properly implemented safety protocols even in areas of high community spread of COVID.**

“We know how to keep teachers, staff and children safe on school campuses. Hundreds of schools and school districts have been able to do this in other parts of the country.” Dr. Kenneth Zangwill, pediatric infectious diseases specialist at Harbor-UCLA.

Pediatricians strongly support the safe return of students to in-person education with appropriate mitigation measures in place such as mask wearing, hand washing, cohorting and social distancing as recommended by our trusted scientists in national, state and county public health. Elementary age students are facing a potentially staggering loss in [expected literacy, H.S. graduation rates and ultimately life expectancy](#). Our teens especially are suffering from the near year of social isolation resulting in a [31% increase in proportion of children ages 12 to 17 presenting with mental health emergencies](#). [Stories of communities](#) dealing with a staggering number of youth suicides likely related to social isolation are heartbreaking.

“Families rely on schools to provide equitable access to a safe stimulating space for all children to learn, opportunities for socialization, and access to school based mental, physical and nutritional health services. We urgently need to get students and teachers in school safely!” Yasuko Fukuda, MD FAAP, San Francisco Pediatrician and Chair of American Academy of Pediatrics, District IX.

Pediatricians urge action **NOW** to allow kids safely back to in-person school.

California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 are organizations of primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. Our mission is to promote the health and well-being of all children and youth in California and to support the professional needs of our California Chapter member pediatricians. We are 501(c)3 nonprofits legally incorporated in California.