



StrongSchoolsNC

What Are We Learning About Children and COVID-19?

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*We know that our children learn best when they have the opportunity to be together with their classmates and teachers. We are learning more every day regarding COVID-19 in children and teens, including the role they may play in spreading COVID-19. We are using the latest research to make decisions about how we should operate our schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to follow new data and science as it is available to learn more. **It is important to understand that current studies and data summarized below still present an early and limited picture of what we know about children and school reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Be sure to check back for regular updates by visiting <https://www.nc.gov/covid19>.*

Children are less likely to have COVID-19, spread COVID-19, or have severe illness with COVID-19 than adults

- Children, particularly younger children, are less likely than adults to have COVID-19.
- Children are less likely to become infected than adults, even after being exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- If infected, children may be less likely to spread COVID-19 to others, even in school or group settings.
- Younger, elementary-aged children appear less likely to spread COVID-19 than older children and adolescents.
- Children are more likely to get COVID-19 from an adult than to spread COVID-19 to an adult.
- Children infected with COVID-19 generally have mild or no symptoms.

COVID-19 appears to behave differently in young children and teens in schools than other common respiratory viruses, like the flu

- Although young children and teens play a major role in flu outbreaks, this does not appear to be the case with COVID-19.
- While there have been some specific examples, so far schools have not seemed to play a major role in the spread of COVID-19.
- Studies from other countries suggest school closures did not contribute to the spread of the epidemic.
- Closing schools may have little effect on reducing deaths due to COVID-19.

Less than 6 feet of social distancing may still be protective for children

- The CDC still recommends 6 feet of social distancing as the most health protective distancing.
- However, in low and medium risk settings, 3 feet of social distancing may lead to a similar risk for the spread of COVID-19, especially when people wear cloth face coverings. Because of decreased risk of spread among children, schools may be considered low or medium risk.
- Keeping students (or children) spread out with more space in between them provides additional protection.

Learn More

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[CDC, Reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and estimated cumulative incidence, by sex and age group — United States; January 22–May 30, 2020](#)

[CDC, MMWR: Morbidity Mortality Weekly Report, Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Children — United States; February 12–April 2, 2020.](#)

[Preprint. MedRxiv, Susceptibility to and transmission of COVID-19 amongst children and adolescents compared with adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis; May 24, 2020](#)

[Cluster of COVID-19 in northern France: A retrospective closed cohort study. April 23, 2020](#)

[SARS-CoV-2 infections in primary schools in northern France: A retrospective cohort study in an area of high transmission.](#)

[School Opening across globe suggest ways to keep coronavirus at bay, despite outbreaks. July 7, 2020](#)

[Prevent Epidemics, COVID-19 Weekly Science Review; June 20-26, 2020](#)

[Nature, Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in children and/or adolescents: a meta-analysis; June 17, 2020](#)

[CDC, COVID 19 Information for Pediatric Health Care Providers; May 29, 2020](#)

[DA International, Hospital Admission in Children and Adolescents With COVID-19, Early results from a national survey conducted by the German Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases; May 5, 2020](#)

[BMJ Global Health, Reduction of secondary transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in households by face mask use, disinfection and social distancing: a cohort study in Beijing, China; May 11, 2020](#)

[Science, Changes in contact patterns shape the dynamics of the COVID-19 outbreak in China; June 26, 2020](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry; June 25, 2020](#)

[World Health Organization, Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19; May 10, 2020](#)

COVID-19 appears to behave differently in young children and teens in schools than other common respiratory viruses, like the flu.

[Cluster of COVID-19 in northern France: A retrospective closed cohort study. April 23, 2020](#)

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[School Opening across globe suggest ways to keep coronavirus at bay, despite outbreaks. July 7, 2020](#)

[Prevent Epidemics, COVID-19 Weekly Science Review; June 20-26, 2020](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry; June 25, 2020](#)

[Learning Policy Institute, Reopening Schools in the Context of COVID-19: Health and Safety Guidelines from other Countries](#)

[Center for Global Development, Back to School: An update on COVID cases as schools reopen; June 12, 2020](#)

[NCIRS, COVID-19 in schools- the experience in NSW; April 26, 2020](#)

[Lancet Child and Adolescent Health, School Closure and Management Practices During Coronavirus Outbreaks Including COVID-19: A Rapid Systematic Review; April 6, 2020](#)

Less than 6 feet of social distancing may still be protective for children

[The Lancet, Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis; June 1, 2020](#)

[World Health Organization, Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19; May 10, 2020](#)