

Toronto Children's Hospital Recommends Back to School without Masks or Social Distancing. Detailed Report

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Toronto's [Hospital for Sick Children](#) (aka SickKids) has released a [detailed report](#) on "the harms of school closure on [children's] physical and mental health." Harms included: "Increased rates of depression, trauma, drug abuse and addiction and [even suicide](#) can be anticipated."

The SickKids report reassures parents that there is "strong evidence that the majority of children who become infected with SARS-CoV-2 are either asymptomatic or have only mild symptoms.... There have been no paediatric deaths reported in Canada to date."

Even more heartening is that SickKids Hospital recommends:

"Non-medical and medical face masks are not required or recommended for children returning to school."

They point out that

"if worn incorrectly, **it could lead to increased risk of infection** and it is not practical for a child to wear a mask properly for the duration of a school day."

They also state the oft-ignored fact that:

"There is a lack of evidence that wearing a face mask prevents SARS-CoV-2 transmission in children."

More like no (direct) evidence. Same goes for adults. Which may be why the report advises teachers to teach without a mask as "[facial expression is an important part of communication](#) which children should not be deprived of."

But what about physical distancing? Should kids all be [cubiced like in China](#) and have recess in a six-foot bubble? Here's what The Hospital for Sick Children says:

"...strict physical distancing should not be emphasized to children in the school setting as it is not practical and could cause significant psychological harm. Close interaction, such as playing and socializing, is central to child development and should not be discouraged."

Instead, to help prevent the spread of COVID they give some reasonable suggestions that have many other health benefits:

“If weather permits, consideration could be given to having classes outside.... Attention should be paid to improving classroom ventilation (e.g. optimizing ventilation system maintenance and increasing the proportion of outside air brought in through these systems).”

Even high-risk children are not advised to be quarantined:

“...there is no convincing evidence to suggest the level of medical risk to [high-risk] children from [SARS-CoV-2 is different from that posed by other respiratory viruses, such as influenza](#). As a result, given the unintended consequences associated with not attending school, **attending school is recommended for the majority of these children.**”

You can read SickKids Hospital’s refreshingly sensible advice in [COVID-19: Recommendations for School Reopening](#).

Maybe we can avoid turning the schools into corona concentration camps as Italian parliamentarian [Sara Cunial has been warning against](#).

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