



July 22, 2020

The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) recognizes that children learn best when physically present in the classroom. While academics are important, children also learn social and emotional skills at school, get healthy meals and exercise, mental health support and other services that are difficult to replicate online.

While returning to school is important for the well-being of children, it is important to pursue re-opening in a way that is safe for all students, teachers, and staff. Decisions about when to return to classrooms and how that is accomplished should be driven by science, so it is done as safely as possible. Guidance should come from public health agencies based on evidence, not politics.

Public health experts should tell us when the time is best to safely open school buildings and educators and administrators should shape how we do it. These decisions should take into account the spread of COVID-19 in the state and the ability of school districts to adapt to make in-person learning safe.

KAAP supports the efforts by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and their guidance to safely get students back to school.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, in June laid out guidelines for returning to in-person school. Their recommendations began with very clear recognition of the need to be flexible and adaptable to circumstances and variations.

*It is critically important to develop strategies that can be revised and adapted depending on the level of viral transmission in the school and throughout the community and done with close communication with state and/or local public health authorities and recognizing the differences between school districts, including urban, suburban, and rural districts.*

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) represents more than 450 practicing pediatricians in the state. The KAAP has the fundamental goal that all children and adolescents in Kansas have the opportunity to grow safe and strong. Please contact Mel Hudelson at (913) 530-6265 for more information.