

# New York Chapter 1

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



## New York Chapter 1

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August 23, 2021

To Parents & Families in Erie County:

The American Academy of Pediatrics New York Chapter 1 and the Buffalo Pediatric Society are issuing this joint letter in support of the 2021-2022 school guidance developed by the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH).

A quote widely attributed to Mahatma Gandhi says, "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." Children are among our society's most vulnerable. As national and local trends signal another stage of the COVID-19 pandemic where new cases and hospitalizations are climbing, we have to do all we can, as physicians and as community, to protect children. The members of our respective organizations have been active participants in the local healthcare community's response to COVID-19, we have seen first-hand the effects of COVID-19 on children and their families. Well child visits, routine screenings and recommended immunizations were put on hold.

The loss of in-person learning affected children in ways we have not begun to measure. And, the uncertainty caused by COVID-19 took a toll on the mental health of many children and their parents and caregivers.

We approach the upcoming school year with a renewed confidence that we have the tools to protect our children from COVID-19. Vaccination for all who are eligible, and ECDOH's universal face mask requirement are robust, evidence-based strategies to keep children in the classroom during the 2021-2022 school year.

Sincerely,

Michael Terranova, MD  
District II Vice Chairman, NYS American Academy of Pediatrics

Joyce Zmuda, MD, FAAP  
President, Buffalo Pediatric Society