

Louisiana Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



“Advocate for all children in Louisiana”

P. O. Box 64629
Baton Rouge, LA 70896
Website: www.laaap.org
Twitter: @MyLaaap
Facebook: @LouisianaAAP

August 16, 2021

Executive Committee

President

Rachel Chatters, MD, FAAP
Lake Charles, LA

Vice President

Joseph Bocchini, Jr., MD, FAAP
Shreveport, LA

Secretary/Treasurer

Kim Mukerjee, MD, MPH, FAAP
New Orleans, LA

Early Career Physician

Bridgett Foreman, MD, FAAP
Alexandria, LA

At-Large Members

Ann Kay Logarbo, MD, FAAP
Covington, LA

Elizabeth Seither, MD, FAAP
Baton Rouge, LA

Immediate Past President

John Vanchiere, MD, PhD, FAAP
Shreveport, LA

Chapter Executive Director

Ashley G. Politz, LMSW
Baton Rouge, LA
Phone: (225) 505-7611
E-mail: ashley.politz@laaap.org

Director of Education & Membership

Taryn Daigle
Lafayette, LA
Phone: (337) 945-9209
E-mail: taryn.daigle@laaap.org

Dear Governor Edwards,

The Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Louisiana AAP) strongly supports the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendation that all policy considerations for school plans during the current COVID-19 pandemic should start with a goal of keeping students and teachers safe and physically present in school. The importance of in-person learning is well-documented and there is significant evidence showing the negative impact that school closures during the 2020 academic year have had on children.

In addition to recommending that all children should be in school this fall for in-class learning, the Louisiana AAP, following guidance from the AAP and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recommend that all students in kindergarten through grade 12 and all school staff should wear face masks and maintain social distance when indoors, regardless of vaccination status.

Our strong recommendation for universal masking while indoors in the school setting is based on the following:

- A significant portion of the student population is not currently eligible for vaccination.
- Masking provides the best protection of unvaccinated students and teachers from COVID-19 and reduces transmission.
- Many schools lack of a system to monitor vaccine status among students, teachers, and staff making policy based on vaccine status impractical.
- Universal masking is the best and most effective strategy to create consistent messages, expectations, enforcement, and compliance without an added burden upon our teachers.
- Vaccination rates in Louisiana remain low and are inadequate to provide herd immunity at this time.
- As the pandemic continues, there is growing concern that variants could emerge that could cause more severe disease. Masks remain an important mitigation strategy to reduce the likelihood of this occurring.
- The Delta variant is eight times more contagious than the novel COVID-19

Louisiana Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



“Advocate for all children in Louisiana”

P. O. Box 64629
Baton Rouge, LA 70896
Website: www.laaap.org
Twitter: @MyLaaap
Facebook: @LouisianaAAP

Executive Committee

President

Rachel Chatters, MD, FAAP
Lake Charles, LA

Vice President

Joseph Bocchini, Jr., MD, FAAP
Shreveport, LA

Secretary/Treasurer

Kim Mukerjee, MD, MPH, FAAP
New Orleans, LA

Early Career Physician

Bridgett Foreman, MD, FAAP
Alexandria, LA

At-Large Members

Ann Kay Logarbo, MD, FAAP
Covington, LA

Elizabeth Seither, MD, FAAP
Baton Rouge, LA

Immediate Past President

John Vanchiere, MD, PhD, FAAP
Shreveport, LA

Chapter Executive Director

Ashley G. Politz, LMSW
Baton Rouge, LA
Phone: (225) 505-7611
E-mail: ashley.politz@laaap.org

Director of Education & Membership

Taryn Daigle
Lafayette, LA
Phone: (337) 945-9209
E-mail: taryn.daigle@laaap.org

As advocates for children, we are concerned about the health and well-being of every child. We know that vaccines, masking and social distancing are the best ways to protect them from COVID-19. We urge you to continue to support the health of all Louisiana citizens by requiring universal masking indoors for everyone in the school setting until such time as science and medical experts determine it safe to discontinue current policy.

Sincerely,

Rachel Chatters, MD, FAAP
Louisiana AAP President

Kim Mukerjee, MD, FAAP
Louisiana AAP Secretary/ Treasurer

Ann Kay Logarbo, MD, FAAP
Louisiana AAP At-large member

John A. Vanchiere, MD, PhD, FAAP
Louisiana AAP Immediate Past President

Joseph Bocchini, Jr., MD, FAAP
Louisiana AAP Vice President

Bridgett Foreman, MD, FAAP
Louisiana AAP Early Career
Physician

Elizabeth Seiter, MD, FAAP
Louisiana AAP At-large member