Safety of Child Care During COVID-19 in 200 Words

Population Health Sciences

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Is child care safe right now? This is a question parents have been frequently asking pediatricians during the pandemic. Since shutdowns in the spring, many caregivers have had to return to work, either on site or remotely, and are struggling with feelings of guilt and fear about sending their children back to child care.

Each week brings new evidence that helps pediatricians inform families about critical decisions on their use of child care. Emerging evidence continues to confirm that children are relatively less susceptible to becoming infected, in general have less severe infections, and are less likely to transmit the infection than adults. Other research, like a recent article published in the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, has shown that child care is not a significant contributor of COVID-19 transmission to adults. Also supporting participation in child care, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has guidelines for safety steps, which are reflected in PolicyLab's own FAQ on this topic.

This evidence suggests that transmission risk in child care reflects transmission within the communities they serve—as the level of community transmission rises, the risk to child care elevates. Therefore, in order for child care to remain open as an essential service to business operations and the viability of our economy, it is critical that adults adhere to mitigation practices such as masking and social distancing, both within child care and the community at large. The question of how safe child care services are during the pandemic ultimately comes back to us and our commitment to protecting our children and communities.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have

any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Strategic Operations & Communications Director Lauren Walens.

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