



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on May 6, 2021

# CDC Is Catching Heat for Senseless Summer Camp Guidelines

Biden administration officials are under fire for government recommendations that children and staff wear masks at all times at summer camps, despite evidence that the risk of transmission among children is rare and catching COVID outdoors is minimal.

The Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) most recent summer camp [guidance](#) calls for masks to be worn at all times, even outdoors and even when engaging in sport activities, by vaccinated adults and children as young as two. It is also recommended that kids remain three feet apart in their own age group and six feet between those in other cohorts.

Campers should also avoid indoor sports that involve close contact with others. The only mask exceptions are for drinking, eating, swimming, and napping, and six feet of distance between staff and campers is recommended during meals.

The guidelines specify that while fewer children have contracted COVID-19, compared with adults, children can become infected and spread the virus to others, which could have severe outcomes. The CDC data shows that children and adolescents ages 0-17 account for 12.5 percent of all COVID-19 cases, and 0.1 percent of all deaths.

Dr. Anthony Fauci defended the guidelines for summer camps but [acknowledged](#) on the *TODAY* show they are "a bit stringent." "I wouldn't call [federal guidelines] excessive ... but they certainly are conservative," said Fauci. "And I think what you're going to start to see is, really, in real-time, continually reevaluating that for its practicality."

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky also went on the defensive during the White House coronavirus response team briefing, [telling](#) reporters, "What we're really trying to avoid in this camp guidance is what we saw in outbreaks and camps last summer."

"If you have 5 [year-olds], 10-year-olds who are on a soccer field all in front of the same soccer ball, we're trying to make sure that there are not a lot of heavy breathing around a singular soccer ball with five kids around it at the same time," she added.

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Pediatricians nationwide have [called](#) the CDC guidance "senseless," "irrational," and "ridiculous," and [also](#) "cruel" and "unnecessarily draconian," all while public health experts admit the risk of transmission outdoors is [very low](#).



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Walensky is still expected to provide explanation to GOP lawmakers on CDC's recommendation that children as young as two should wear masks. Pushing back on the guidelines, in a [letter](#) sent on April 22, Republicans requested the CDC to explain in detail which developmental milestones the CDC had considered when setting a minimum age requirement, whether the CDC is remaining up-to-date on the latest science related to childhood COVID-19 transmission, and if it has a plan and willingness to update its recommendations. The signatories asked Walensky to provide the answers by May 6.

Walensky allegedly ignored the inquiry and instead sent a very powerful message to all the parents who would like their children to go to camps: get your kids vaccinated. "If we have authorization for 12- to 15-year-olds, and they can get vaccinated before going to camp, that's what I would advocate, so they can take their masks off outdoors," she [said](#).

[Reportedly](#), the federal regulators prepare to authorize use of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine in adolescents aged 12 to 15 early next week.

Summer camps are especially important for America's children because of the psychological and physical stress they have been under during the past year, with most kids isolated at home and away from their friends and peers.

"We really feel like summer camps are a huge opportunity for kids to disconnect from screens that they've all had to be on during their academic year," [said](#) Dr. Sara Bode, a pediatrician who helped write the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) summer camp guidance for 2021. "Summer camps offer this social and emotional enriching learning opportunity for kids that is critical."

"The goal of day and overnight camps across the United States this year will be to restore some normalcy to the lives of children who saw their lives upturned by COVID-19," [said](#) Tom Rosenberg, president and CEO of the American Camp Association. He noted there's a lot of discussion around very real academic losses the children have suffered, but not nearly enough has been said about the social and emotional losses, which would help to be restored in activities such as summer camps.

Masks are not only an unnecessary measure against COVID transmission in children, but we do not yet fully understand the extent of the damage they have on children's emotional and social development, potentially preventing them from [learning empathy](#), among other aspects critical to a child's development. Pushing masks on children, top "health officials" seem to care little about these issues.

While [many states](#) have already dropped mask mandates, many have not. Also, in states where governors have rejected mask enforcement, many public school boards vehemently adhere to the CDC "recommendations," as if they were the supreme law of the land. Parents, it's time to get involved and engaged and to stop taking orders from "officials" who do not have our children's well-being and best interests in mind.



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