



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

Statement from Sen. Fred Akshar on New COVID-19 Policies for Daycare, Preschool and Summer Camp

FRED AKSHAR May 21, 2021

| ISSUE: **MASK MANDATES**



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Today, Governor Cuomo and New York State's Department of Health made sudden and sweeping changes to New York's COVID-19 policies for children in daycare, preschool and summer camps.

These policies went into effect immediately without any input from providers and without any

time for these programs or parents to prepare. Children aged two and up are immediately required to wear a face mask at all times, except for when eating or sleeping.

Considering the CDC-backed easing of mask mandates and the Governor's own acknowledgement that the worst of the pandemic is well behind us, this abrupt shift in policy makes no sense. For over a year, daycares and preschools have been allowed to operate without a mask mandate. And by and large, that worked well and there were minimal outbreaks of coronavirus in these spaces.

Now, instead of fostering growth and development, providers and staff will be forced to devote most of their day to keeping face masks on toddlers. It's hard enough to keep shoes on a toddler; forcing them to wear masks and adults to monitor that behavior for up to 8 hours a day is both profoundly challenging and deeply unfair for everyone.

We've seen that children, particularly young kids, are not shown to be highly at risk of COVID-19, nor have they shown to be superspreaders. Teachers and staff have access to the vaccine, if they haven't already been vaccinated.

Implementing and enforcing a new mask mandate now is just another arbitrary, logic-defying order not supported by science.