

# Mastering the Media

*Return to School -- July 2020*



American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



# TODAY'S SESSION

## Welcome

*Sally Goza, MD, FAAP, AAP President*

## Media Training Tips

*Susan Stevens Martin, Director of News Media and Public Relations*

## School Guidance and Media FAQs

*Sean O'Leary, MD, MPH, FAAP, Vice Chair, Committee on Infectious Diseases*

## Q & A



# WELCOME



- Sally Goza, MD, FAAP, President, American Academy of Pediatrics

# MEDIA STRATEGY

1. What is your communications goal?
2. Will this media outlet help you reach a key audience? Will its format enable you to get your message to that audience?
3. Do you have time? Are you prepared?
4. Message clarity. Consider controlled vs. uncontrolled media



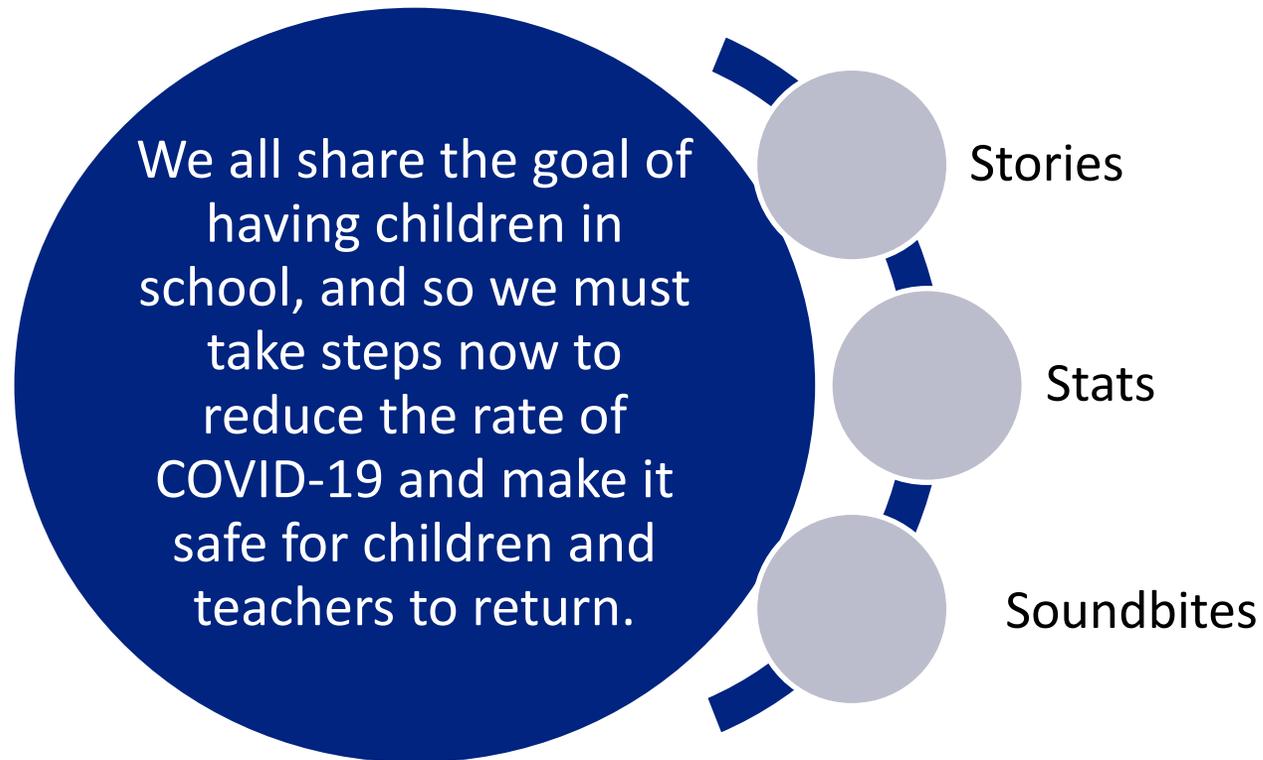
## **MEDIA TOOLBOX TIP: ASK YOUR QUESTIONS FIRST**



- Tell me about the story.
- Who else are you interviewing?
- Are you approaching this story from any particular perspective?
- What's the format?
- What do you need from me?
- What is your deadline?



# KEY MESSAGE



**MEDIA TOOLBOX TIP:  
MASTER THE BRIDGE**



- Transition into your key message
- Shift from a negative question to a positive response
- Correct misinformation or a bad premise



# SAMPLE BRIDGE LINES

- “We don’t know that, but what we do know is ...”
- “Great question, but what’s most important for parents to understand is ...”
- “Keep in mind that...”
- “Let me tell you what we’ve been seeing...”
- “I’m not sure that’s the case...”
- “That said ...”
- “Let me put that in context.”
- “But even more importantly...”
- “If your listeners keep only one thing in mind, it’s that...”
- “What we see as an even bigger issue is...”
- “The thing we are focusing on most is...”
- “I wouldn’t say that. What I *would* say is that...”
- “What our research shows is...”



# BRIDGING EXAMPLE

- ❑ Question: President Trump is trying to force all schools to open. Is he putting children at risk?
- ❑ Answer: We all share the ultimate goal of it being safe for children to be back in school. **What's most important now**, is that every community take steps to reduce the rate of COVID-19 to make it safe for children and teachers to return to the classroom. Schools will need funding to make this happen, and so we are calling on the federal government to provide these resources immediately.



# TIPS FOR SKYPE OR ZOOM INTERVIEWS

- Test your tech in advance. Be near wifi router.
- Professional or plain background, some depth is ok.
- Add lighting; watch for shadows. Elevate camera to eye level.
- Look at the camera, not the person on the screen
- You are always “on”



# TIPS FOR BROADCAST MEDIA

## TELEVISION:

- Body language
- Remember to smile, or neutral expression
- Conversational with reporter
- Don't be defensive
- Repeat key messages

## RADIO:

- Sound bites important
- Short, repeated phrases
- Enunciate and speak slowly
- Can have talking points
- Stand up



# WHAT TO WEAR ON TV OR SKYPE

- Solid, jewel, or pastel colors.
- Avoid prints, including fine prints
- Avoid big, flashy or noisy jewelry.
- Glasses can cause glare.
- Consider make-up – or at least powder.
- Remove objects from pockets, so they lie flat.
- More tips: AAP.org News Room “Spokesperson Resources”



# TIPS FOR PRINT MEDIA

- ❑ Stay on message. Rambling leads to random quotes.
- ❑ Offer documents and background.
- ❑ Slow down. Listen for typing.
- ❑ No need to discuss what you don't know.
- ❑ Make sure you are understood.
- ❑ **Emphasize your main messages.**



# SCHOOL GUIDANCE & MEDIA FAQs

Sean O'Leary, MD, FAAP

July 30, 2020

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***The AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.***

[AAP: COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry](#)



# AAP GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RE-OPENING SCHOOLS

- School policies must be **flexible and nimble** in responding to new information and must be able to **be revised and adapted** to level of viral transmission in the school and community
- Special **considerations and accommodations to account for the diversity of youth** should be made, especially for our vulnerable populations.
- School policies should be **guided by supporting the overall health and well-being** of all children, adolescents , their families, and their communities.



# PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES

- CDC guidance
  - 6 feet distance between desk/kids when feasible
- Evidence suggests 3 feet may be just as beneficial especially with cloth face coverings
- Important to encourage social distancing between adults
  - Increasing evidence of higher degree of spread between adults than from children to adults
- Grade specific:
  - Pre-Kindergarten/Preschool: Cohort classes to decrease crossover
  - Elementary: Spacing of desks and cohorting
  - Secondary: Spacing of desks, minimizing/eliminating lockers, increased spacing if activities include increased exhalation (singing, exercise)



# SPECIAL DISTANCING ISSUES

- Busing
  - Taking into account physical distancing and recommendations for use of face coverings
- Hallways
  - Strategies to reduce traffic in hallways
- Meals/Cafeteria
  - Maximizing distancing by reimagining where students eat (classrooms and other spaces)
- Playgrounds
  - Enforcing physical distancing outdoors may difficult and most effective strategy to reduce risk
  - Managing group sizes and cohorting are models to help manage risk



# FACE COVERINGS AND PPE GUIDELINES

- Cloth face coverings should be used as possible based on developmental capacity and on feasibility
- Critical for staff to wear face coverings particularly if closer than 6 feet with students
  - Consideration for when teaching language/reading
- Masking and protective equipment for medical procedures should be based on current recommendations
- Grade specific:
  - Prekindergarten/preschool: May be difficult to implement
  - Elementary: Use of cloth face coverings should be encouraged when harms do not outweigh benefits
  - Secondary: Universal use of cloth face coverings for middle and high school students when not able to distance at least 6 feet



# CLEANING AND DISINFECTING GUIDELINES

- Frequent handwashing
- Reduce high touch areas as much as possible and at least daily cleaning if not possible to reduce
- Cleaning of high touch outdoor spaces should be included in plans



# SCREENING AND TESTING

- Temperature and symptom screening at schools may not be feasible in person
  - Regardless, parents should be encouraged to keep their child or adolescent home if they are ill
- Testing prior to school re-entry will only give a false sense of security
- Staff or students with symptoms should be encouraged to connect with their medical provider to discuss the need for testing



# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR SICK CHILDREN/ADOLESCENTS

- Many more children will be sent home from school when sick this school year
- Schools are likely to require clearance from pediatricians before return is permitted
- Guidance encourages testing for known exposure to COVID-19 patient or COVID-19 symptoms
  - Symptoms are extensive (see to right)
  - Can expect guidance to change as flu season and COVID-19 cases increase

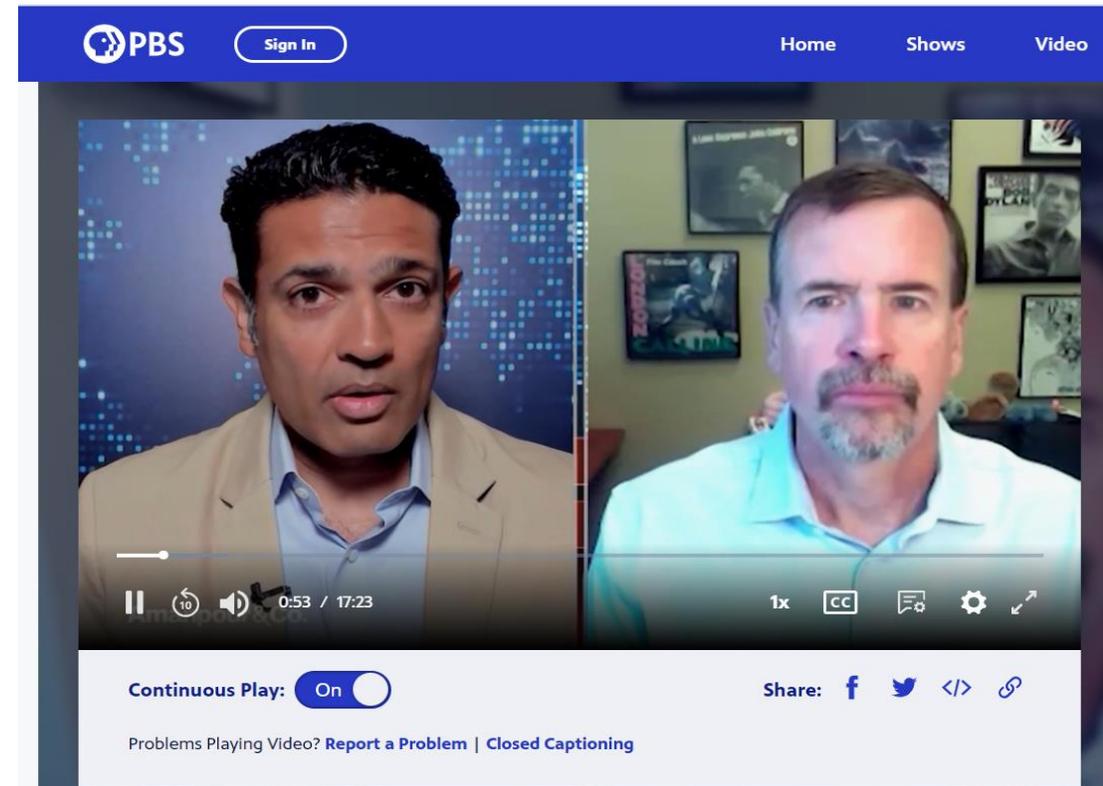
## COVID-19 Symptom List:

- Fever, chills, rigors
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Rash
- Nasal congestion or rhinorrhea
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Myalgia
- Poor feeding or poor appetite



# BE PREPARED FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT:

- Health risks to children returning to school
- Health risks to teachers, staff
- Community spread and impact on reopening
- School safety protocols (masks, distance, tests, etc)
- Political football (practice your pivot!)



# Q: HOW EASILY IS THE VIRUS TRANSMITTED BY CHILDREN? (WHAT ABOUT THE SOUTH KOREA STUDY?)

- Studies show children and teens are less symptomatic, less likely to have serious disease, and less likely to spread infection (especially younger children).
- A study from South Korea showed that children under age 10 were roughly half as likely to spread COVID-19.
- The study also suggested that adolescents aged 10-19 may spread the virus as efficiently as adults. This is not unexpected, as teens often have bodies more similar to adults and may socialize more like adults.
- With this in mind, schools may consider prioritizing the return of younger children, and taking additional measures to ensure physical distancing and the wearing of face coverings among older children.
- Policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within schools must still be balanced with the known harms to children, adolescents, families, and the community by keeping children at home.



# Q: IS REOPENING SCHOOLS RISKING THE LIVES OF TEACHERS?

- Based on what we know, reducing adult-to-adult contact is the best way to prevent the spread of COVID. But, until we have this virus completely under control, there will be some level of risk involved in schooling.
- As a doctor on the frontlines of this crisis, I understand that teachers are concerned. What schools need is the resources to make the necessary measures to keep students, teachers, and staff safe.
- Schools need funding for facemasks, face shields, and hand sanitizer. They also need resources to adapt busing and staffing. It is vitally important that Congress act quickly to provide additional funding for schools.



# Q: SHOULD WE FORCE SCHOOLS TO REOPEN?

- Schools in areas with high levels of COVID-19 community spread should not be forced to open again against the recommendations of local public health and school leaders.
- It is important that schools base their reopening decisions on the level of viral transmission in their community. It may be appropriate for schools in areas with surging cases to delay school opening until the virus is more under control.
- But in our view – all schools should also be working towards the goal of opening for in-person learning when it is appropriate to do so. And all schools will need funding to prepare. Withholding funding from schools that are not able to reopen could put students and teachers at risk.
- In many communities that are experiencing high rates of COVID now, we need to drop the rate of COVID infections first so that we can reopen schools safely. We all share the goal of having students in classrooms with teachers. To get there safely, we must take steps to reduce the risks for everyone and that must start within our communities. Families need to maintain social distance, wear face coverings, and follow the advice of health experts to keep the rate of transmission low. Schools will need resources to implement safety protocols recommended by the AAP and CDC.



# Q: HOW DOES AAP ALIGN WITH CDC'S RECOMMENDATIONS? WHAT ABOUT 3 VS 6 FEET?

- Physical distancing is fundamental to lowering the risk of spread of COVID-19, as the primary mode of transmission is through respiratory droplets by persons in close proximity.
- The CDC recommends that schools space desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible. However, in many school settings, 6 feet between students is not feasible without limiting the number of students. As such, evidence suggests that spacing as close as 3 feet may approach the benefits of 6 feet of space, particularly if students are wearing face coverings and are asymptomatic.
- Schools should weigh the benefits of strict adherence to a 6-foot spacing rule between students with the potential downside if remote learning is the only alternative.



# Q: SHOULD SCHOOLS REQUIRE ALL STUDENTS AND STAFF TO WEAR MASKS? (WHAT KIND?)

- Cloth masks are okay for most situations. Cloth face coverings protect others if the wearer is infected with COVID-19 and is not aware. Cloth masks may offer some level of protection for the wearer. Evidence continues to mount on the importance of universal face coverings in interrupting the spread of COVID-19.
- School staff and older students (middle or high school) may be able to wear cloth face coverings safely and consistently and should be encouraged to do so.
- Although ideal, it may be more challenging to require younger children to consistently wear cloth face coverings.
- When developing policy regarding the use of cloth face coverings by students or school staff, school districts and health advisors should consider whether the use of cloth face coverings is developmentally appropriate and feasible and whether the policy can be instituted safely.



# Q: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM REOPENING EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOLS IN OTHER COUNTRIES?

- Countries that have reopened schools in other parts of the world have had varying amounts of success in controlling the spread of COVID-19.
- With some exceptions, countries that have been able to lower the spread of the virus have had less reclosing of schools.



# QUESTIONS



# AAP RESOURCES

- AAP.org News Room – “Spokesperson Resources”
  - Talking points
  - Media training videos
  - What to wear on TV
  - Spokesperson guidelines
- AAP Public Affairs
  - Susan Stevens Martin, [ssmartin@aap.org](mailto:ssmartin@aap.org)
  - Lisa Black, [lblack@aap.org](mailto:lblack@aap.org)
  - Jamie Poslosky, [jposlosky@aap.org](mailto:jposlosky@aap.org)

