

The State of Our Children: Kids and COVID-19

November 16, 2020



Several counties throughout the San Joaquin Valley and Central Coast were moved back to the purple tier, higher-risk communities with widespread transmission of COVID-19. For every community, continued diligence is required to slow the spread of the virus. Flu season and increasing COVID-19 cases across the state are concerns for all California counties. **This is the state of our children for the week of November 16, 2020.**

Current Issues Facing our Children: Returning to School

Carmela Sosa, MD - Medical Director, Primary Care and Guilds Center for Community Health

The impact of COVID-19 on our kids' ability to return to school has been significant. As the American Academy of Pediatrics stated early on in this pandemic, the best place for children is in school but only IF it is safe, given community transmission rates, school safety plans, family circumstances and other factors.

As counties improve their control of the virus and schools reopen, there remains the balance between the continued need to control spread of the virus with meeting the educational, social and emotional well-being of our children and adolescents. Some local schools have begun to reopen utilizing cohort or hybrid models, while still allowing students to continue their learning entirely online, should families choose. The majority of children who test positive for COVID-19 may only have mild to moderate symptoms but the data continues to show that children play a role in disease transmission to their peers and adults around them.

As we reviewed in the last **"State of Our Children"** brief, children with chronic conditions will be especially vulnerable with the return to school and, it can be argued, that they also have the greatest need to attend for learning, socialization and other healthcare services.

One of the challenges schools, parents and healthcare providers will face, is how to differentiate between symptoms of coronavirus and other common childhood illness such as a cold, strep throat or allergic rhinitis. They can share many of the same features: runny nose, nasal congestion, fatigue, malaise, headache, fever, myalgia, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Valley Children's has developed several resources, based upon the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, to assist healthcare providers, school leaders and others in navigating the return to school. Links to those resources can be found below and also available at valleychildrens.org/media-center/school-resources.

 [COVID-19 Symptom Algorithm for Students](#)

 [COVID-19 Disease Risk for Children and Adolescents with Medical Complexity or Special Healthcare Needs](#)

 [Considerations for Classroom Placement](#)

These resources are provided as reference materials for our school partners for use and adaptations to their own communities, as appropriate.

 [Mask Waiver and Medical Exemption Form](#)

 [Return to School Form – COVID-19](#)

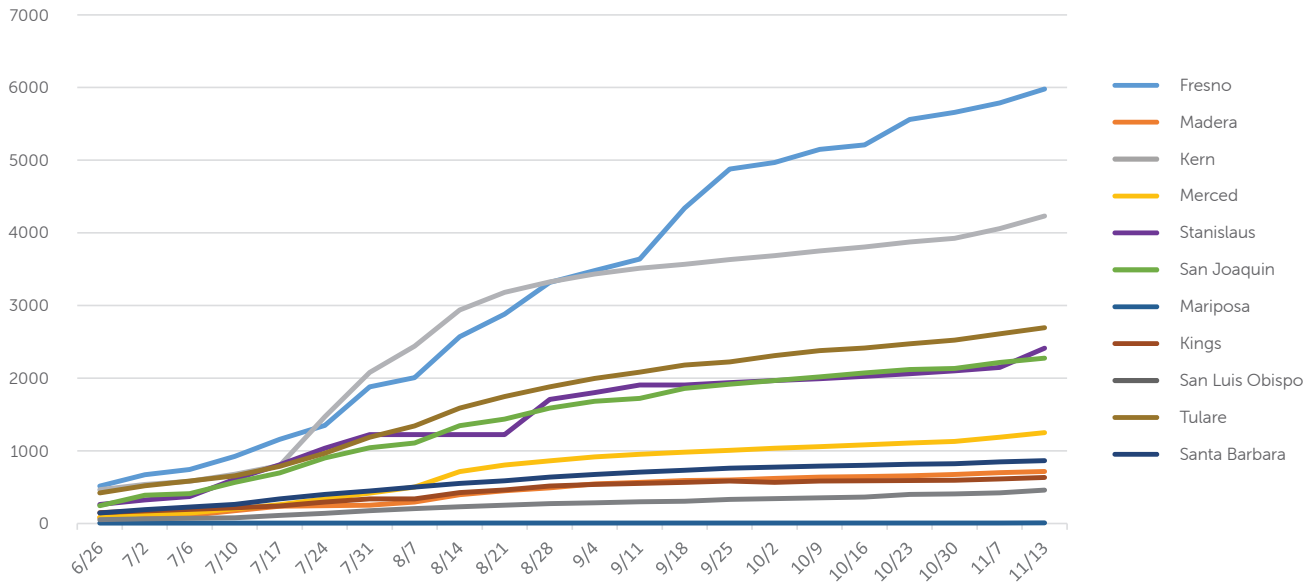
Despite the efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 and ensure school safety, families must feel comfortable in making the choice that is best for their child. Each family situation is different and what works for one may not work for others. Healthcare providers are excellent resources to help families think through what is best for their child.

Detection of Child Abuse in Virtual Learning

An additional resource particularly useful in school settings deals with helping teachers and school nurses identify warning signs of child abuse in remote learning settings. Prepared by the team at Valley Children's Guilds Center for Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment, this document provides excellent background and suggestions for use in virtual learning settings. **For additional resources, please visit our website at valleychildrens.org/childadvocacy.**

COVID-19 Cases for Children by County (for the week ending November 13, 2020)*

* Children ages 0 – 17 (Stanislaus County data includes children ages 0-20)



Current Data and Trends

Across Valley Children’s Healthcare Network (as of November 9, 2020)



Everyone Can Do Their Part

SLOW THE SPREAD WEAR A MASK



For More Information visit valleychildrens.org/covid19 or email contactus@valleychildrens.org