Returning to school for children with medical complexity.

This is the most challenging year for parents and caregivers of children with medical complexity in contemplating the return of their children to school. While ultimately the decision to return to school or not can only rest with the parent or care provider, but we have provided a brief list of information that is hopefully helpful to you in coming to the best decision for your child.

General

• children *appear to have less severe symptoms of illness than adults* (especially older adults)

• children (especially younger children) appear not to spread COVID-19 to the same degree as children over the age of 10 or adults.

• children, however, do contract COVID-19.

• some children do suffer complications including death.

• some children contract multisystem inflammatory syndrome.

• overall, we have very little data but more will likely become available as children return to school.

Children with Special Health Care Needs

• are likely to be at increased risk for *more severe illness from COVID-19*

• children who are especially at risk have *chronic lung disease (including severe asthma), heart disease, and conditions that weaken the immune system*.

• some children may be especially at risk, e.g., children who are technology dependent (e.g., tracheostomy dependent, who require suctioning and ventilation); these children may also place others, including staff, at risk because of aerosolization that may happen during routine care.

Adults at home or caregivers may be at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19

- anyone: chronic kidney disease, COPD, immunocompromised from solid organ transplant, obesity, serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease or cardiomyopathies, sickle cell disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus

Other Factors To Consider

• children who have chronic medical conditions that are unstable

• children who live with adults with chronic medical conditions or who are older

• community risk of spread, i.e., test positivity rate

• ability of school to provide a consistently safe environment (i.e., screening, spacing, cleaning)

• masking for children who are old enough to tolerate a mask

*Evidence: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/evidence-table.html