



Schools to reopen on May 11th, children do not have to maintain social distance

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It is not necessary for children up to 17 years old to maintain social distance while playing, doing sports or when they go back to school on May 11th. Epidemiological studies worldwide show no evidence of children playing a relevant role in the transmission to family members and others.



This means that cases of people being infected at home by a child attending school are very rare. Additionally, the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu, RIVM) reports that less than 1% of the patients with the coronavirus in the Netherlands and other countries are younger than 20 years.

At the same time, research has shown that children can carry the virus. However, the risk of transmission to other children and adults is small. This small risk needs to be addressed by having children practice good cough and hand hygiene. Minders and parents must teach children to cough or sneeze into the crook of the elbow or into a

tissue. The tissue must be disposed of afterwards. Children and teachers who are ill with fever and/or cough should stay at home until all symptoms have disappeared.

Furthermore, it is important that children learn to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly, before they go to school, at school or after sports and immediately after coming home from school. This should be done with a clean hand towel or with a paper hand towel.

Another reason for children not to maintain social distance is the negative effects of the current measures on their development. Children adapt quickly to the new environment and accept the new reality as 'normal'. This means that children learn that it is normal that they cannot go to school, cannot play together, cannot do sports and that there cannot be any physical contact. As result, children grow up with a distorted picture of society. This way they will not develop as social individuals, with potentially negative consequences.

Children are allowed to sit in class and play outside. Large groups of children packed closely together is undesirable, especially in indoor areas. If the outdoor area is large enough, children can be outside together. If the outdoor area is small, it is better to separate groups.

The adults at school must, however, adhere to the 1.5 meter distance rule.

Schools reopen

The decision to send children back to school on May 11th was made, among others, because for some children it is not safe to stay at home all the time. In addition, in some cases the home does not provide a proper learning environment. Not all parents seem to be capable of providing adequate guidance and the schools cannot reach all children. Moreover, children in vulnerable situations have less access to learning opportunities at home and receive

less support from parents. Neither does everybody has access to the required ICT aids; in these cases instructions by teachers are often absent. In short, the closing of schools a couple of weeks ago has disrupted many things. Parents were under extra pressure because children were at home and needed help with their learning at home. In addition, parents had to arrange a babysitter more frequently.

Reopening the schools is also positive for the children's rhythm and their cognitive and social development. Furthermore, teachers can monitor the social and emotional well-being of pupils better and they can offer direct support where needed. Children can now play with their friends again. When children are back at school this will relieve the strain on parents. Additionally, at school children can talk to others about Covid-19 and share their experiences over the past few weeks in a safe environment. As a result of reopening the schools, approximately 800 children attending school will also receive breakfast at school again every day for a healthy start of the day.

See also

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