



Hello Meher Friends



Mrs. Muñoz

W^e hope this finds you all safe and healthy. We are continuing to move forward successfully and are happy to say that we have had zero problems during this COVID time. I want

to start off by thanking our amazing staff for all of their hard work, their dedication and diligence in doing everything possible to keep the children safe. All of the extra work is time consuming but everyone takes it very seriously and the team work is commendable.

I want to send my deepest appreciation to our Monterey Park families for their extremely generous donations to our food drive. With so many families struggling, we felt it was an important thing for Meher to do and our families rose to the occasion. We donated the food to the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank that has a once a week distribution in Montebello. Thank you so much.

The last few weeks we've had to deal with heat, fires, smokey air and winds. We had to adjust the daily outdoor schedules quite a few days because of the poor air quality but of course, the children were troopers and handled it well. They were definitely happy when they could play outside again. It is nice to feel a change in the air and cool weather coming our way.

A special thank you to Jemma Huang's parents for donating face masks and face shields to Meher. Keeping our supply of PPE equipment and approved cleaning and disinfecting supplies stocked is very important for our ongoing success during this time. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated.

Our Halloween celebrations, though different from previous years, were enjoyed by all. The younger children had some fun and special costumes. The older children were very creative with their crazy hat and mask day. There were some great homemade hats. You can view some of the hats and costumes from that day, along with other Meher going ons on our Instagram at **meher_montessori_schools**.

I want to thank everyone that has helped support our fundraiser. This year we really need everyone's help in raising funds to help support our needs during this time of extremely low enrollment and extra costs for supplies. You can visit our website for the

link if you would like to support our Charleston Wrap fundraiser.

During the month of November, we are waiving our \$250 application fee, so if you know of anyone looking for child care, please tell them about our great school.

A reminder that we will be closed on Wednesday, November 11 in observation of Veteran's Day and on Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 in celebration of Thanksgiving.

Peace and love to you all,
Adela Muñoz

A Report From Mrs. Rivera



Mrs. Rivera

Hello to everyone. October was our month of Halloween fun! Our Halloween Parade on October 30th was smooth-flowing, exciting and fun. There was no parent participation, but our Elementary children,

together with their teachers, cheered and took photos. Mrs. Munoz will post more photos in Instagram. The children came dressed in their costumes and underneath their costume was their School Shirt - it was our "School Shirt Day" too! At this point, I'd like to say thank you to all our parents for helping us attain 100% participation last School Shirt Day. Now we can schedule a pizza lunch this November. A notice of this celebration will be posted in our sign in/out book. We sent out individual photos of the children wearing their lovely costumers complete with their accessories. The snack party in the afternoon was fun with delicious food. The children went home filled up and happy and contented with the treat bags given by their classmates and teachers.

We started our Charleston Wrap Fall Fundraiser this month and thank all you dear parents for your support and generosity. Charleston Wrap has a wonderful online

catalog with many different high quality products. Please continue to invite more friends and relatives to go online and order these beautiful products. The amount raised will be used to buy materials for the classroom to benefit our children. Once again, thank you so much!

Thank you too for the Food Bank groceries brought in by the children for the needy families who are struggling every day. We discussed the importance of being helpful and sharing with others who have less. The children understood the purpose of our School Drive and were excited to help out.

We are all blessed to live in California, but each state has its pros and cons. This month our school participated in the "Great California Shake Out" with an earthquake drill. Beforehand I discussed natural phenomena with our children.

They were all eyes and ears as I discussed a few causes of earthquakes and what to do if one occurs. We then practiced going under the table and placing hands on the head.

Afterwards they lined up to go outside for roll call.

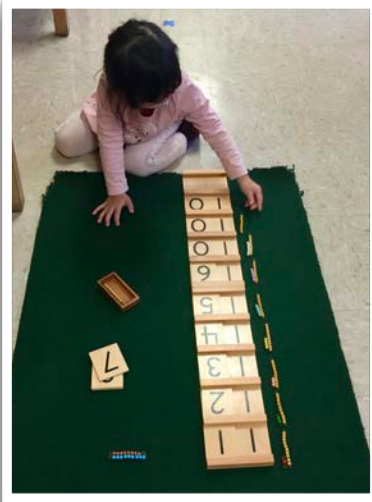
Two children in our class had birthdays this month: Salvador Gallardo, 5 years old, and Ellie Wong, 4 years old. We enjoyed celebrating their birthdays with the class and hearing about the special things they did with their families.

Older children in our class are progressing well with their phonics, cursive writing and writing numbers: recognition and sequence. They continue to be good models in action and manners. The favorite





activities currently are metal insets (zigzag lines and shading process within the lines), puzzle maps (World and the United States of America), short chains and writing numbers to mention a few. Four children in our class are independently writing their first names and soon their last names as well. Our younger children are busy working with punching papers, coloring paints, sounding and tracing their sandpaper letters,



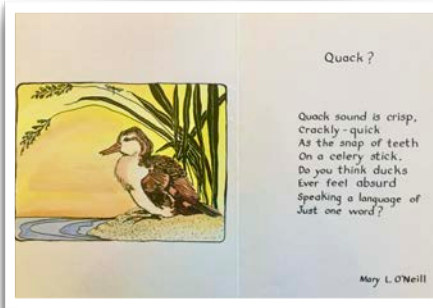
sweeping, cleaning tables and other work geared towards the enhancement of their motor skills. They have all been better in their socialization process. I'd like to thank my parents who attended the

“Parent Night/Back to School Night” last October 15 through Zoom. Important rules of the classroom were discussed, clarifications made on some names of materials used by the children, along with great sharing. Your time to be with me showed your interest in and support of the

learning process of your child. I know that we are going to be a great team! Thank you once again.

As always, a huge thank you to Ms. Mills and Ms. Martinez for the original art works done while managing the peace and discipline among the children. To you ladies a round of applause!

Friendly reminders for next month: two holidays for us to enjoy: Veteran’s Day on November 11, and Thanksgiving Holiday November 26 and 27. A flyer will be posted in our sign-in book by November 16 for the children’s Thanksgiving Party. Thank you in advance for your kindness and generosity.



A poem that your child has learned in class, **“Quack?”** by Mary L. O’Neill

“Quack sound is crisp, crackly quick

as the snap of teeth on a celery stick.

Do you think ducks ever feel absurd, speaking a language of just one word?”

Sincerely yours,
Mrs. Rivera, Ms. Mills and Ms. Martinez

A Report From Ms. Lopez



Ms. Lopez

Hello Parents!
October was a busy and fun month in our classroom. All the activities planned for the month were successful. The children enjoyed creating a scarecrow, painting pumpkins, making pancakes, and participating in our very first fashion show. Thank you parents, for

making this possible.

Santi and Nina brought a comic book from home to share with the classroom that took us a few weeks to finish. The comic book is called "Human Body Theatre." We learned about the human body and the importance of each system. I had very interactive conversations with the children about the body and they were intrigued with what their insides do. When we finished the comic book, we had a nice transition into learning about the 5 senses. Currently, we have learned about the senses of smelling and hearing.

I'm thrilled to say that we got 100% participation in School Shirt Day for the month of October. Friday, November 20th



will be our School Shirt Day for this month. Let's get 100% for the third time in a row!

We are planning our Thanksgiving party with the children. I will be updating all of you in the

next week or two about how we will be celebrating this year. We still want to make it a fun day for the children. Leading up to the

celebration, the kids will have an art project with Mrs. Suh and will learn about the history of Thanksgiving.

Our classroom normalizes more and more every day. The children enter the environment ready to work and be busy. There are moments where I get to sit and observe them working hard. It is always a pleasure to witness young children have so much self-control and excitement for the work they do and accomplish.

Lastly, I want to say thank you parents for participating in our fundraiser and donating to the food drive.

See you next Newsletter!
Ms. Lopez and Mrs. Suh.

A Report From Mr. Mindes

Hello Meher Families,



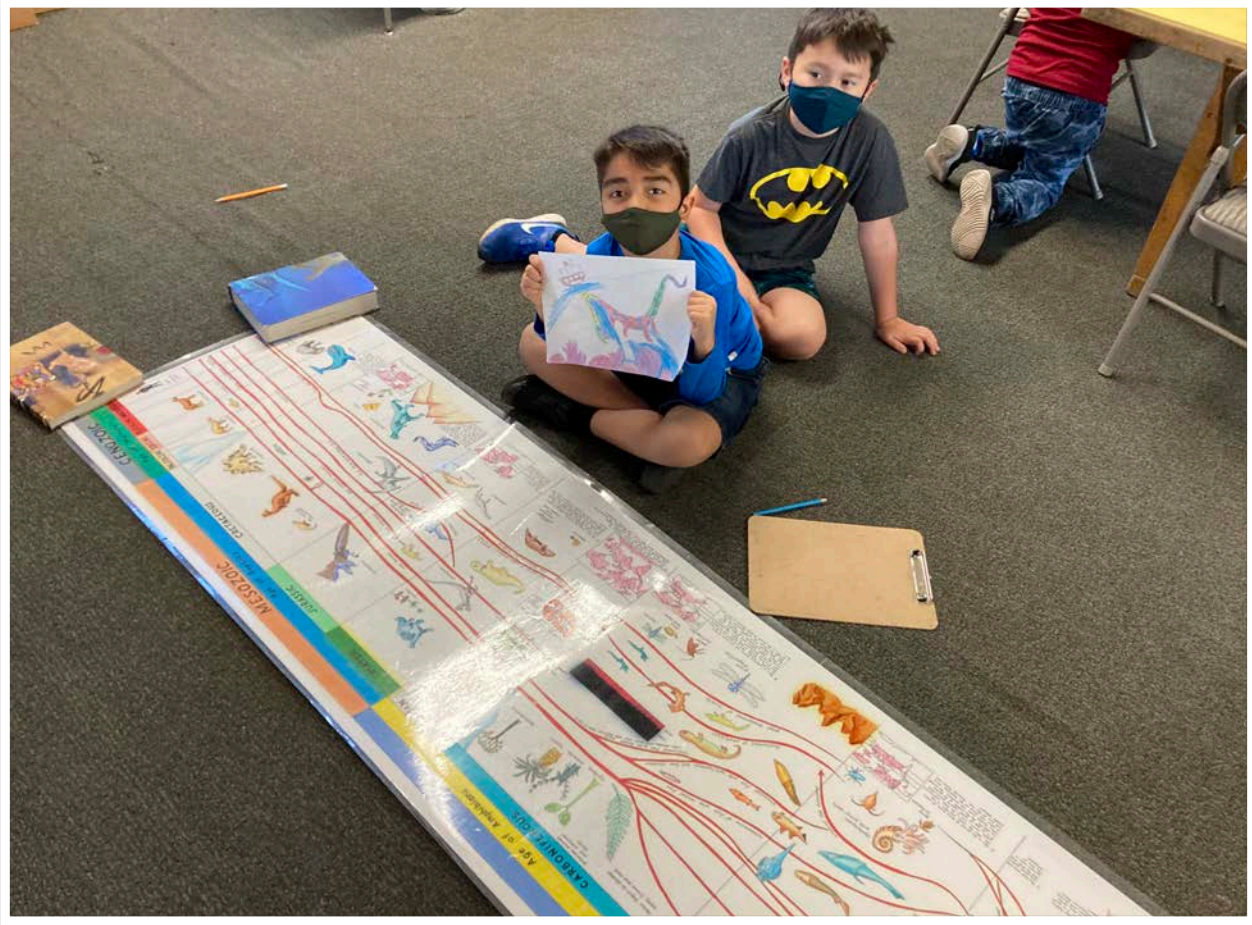
Mr. Mindes

November - the month when the harvest ends and the holidays begin. At Meher, November means the start of a busy couple of months, by which I mean planning, decorating, and enjoying a series of classroom festivities. And while this year's celebrations will be

limited to students and staff, a joyful spirit is sure to pervade as our Halloween parade on October 30th illustrated - students appeared to have as much fun this year as in the past, sharing their costumed hats with peers and staff.

The Coming of Life

With the coming New Year approaching, it was the perfect moment to travel way, way back in time - in fact back to the beginning of life on earth! An account of ancient life up to the present is recounted in Dr. Montessori's "**Coming Of Life**," story, which



Mr. Mindes' students working with the Coming of Life Time Line after Mr. Page's presentation

Mr. Page presented. In telling the story, Mr. Page introduced the students to earth's first living inhabitants, single-celled creatures, then carried them along through many millennia, introducing the coming of plants, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and finally mammals. The students followed along spellbound, as they imagined earth's creatures evolving. A few days after the story, a student showed me a picture of a creature he had drawn. When I asked him in what geological era did he think his animal emerged, he figured it was somewhere near the end of Paleozoic, beginning of the Mesozoic.

Woodworking, Knotting Lanyards, and Sculpting Clay

This month we started a few new crafts - woodworking, knotting lanyards, and

sculpting clay. We are hoping to offer other crafts as well - sewing and weaving ideas anyone? Besides the fact that making things with your hands is just fun, creative and often practical, it must help develop motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Mr. Muñoz built a sturdy

workbench with an attached vise, for the students to cut, nail, and plane their



woodworking projects. It didn't take long for a few of the older students to start building miniature chair and desk pieces!

To close, I want to wish all of you a Happy Thanks-giving!

Mr. Page Presents Second Great Lesson In Montessori Elementary "The Coming of Life"

On Tuesday October 27, Mr. Page presented to Mr. Mindes' Elementary students "The Coming of Life" - which is the second of 5 **Great Lessons** in Montessori Elementary. These lessons are designed to spark the child's imagination, help them see that they are part of the universe and help them find their own place and role within it. The first Great Lesson is entitled, "**God With No Hands**" or the creation story. It is an imaginative story told to explain how the universe was created and the subsequent creation of our earth. The second



Great Lesson, "**The Coming of Life,**" is a way to help the children understand the how and why of the first life coming to earth. This story culminates in human beings being on earth. The third Great Lesson is entitled, "**The Coming of Human Beings**" and talks all about what is unique about human beings and what makes us special and distinct from other animals. The final two Great Lessons present the two major accomplishments of humans. The first is the creation of language and the second the creation of numeration.

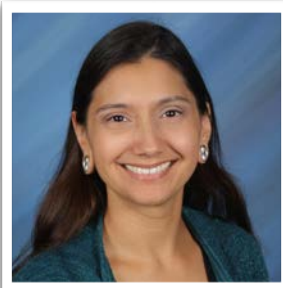
We always want the children to feel that they have a connection to all of life and especially to human beings through all time. Our goal is to help the children understand the universe and how the earth fits into universal order. We introduce them to the variety of life forms on the earth so they will understand the place of human beings within the larger frame and scheme of things. Then all of life will begin to have meaning.

If you would like to see this Great Lesson being given, we did record it and it can be streamed from this [Youtube link](#).

From Ms. Wildhaber, Director of our Altadena Campus School News

First off, thank you so much to all the parents who have brought disinfecting wipes. We are stocked for quite a while with these. If you come across Lysol disinfecting spray, please grab some for the school. We can never have enough of these at this time. Make sure to bring your receipt so the school can reimburse you for it.

Families, please remember to close the playground gate every time you come into the school to drop-off or pick-up your child. This is a long-standing safety protocol to ensure children remain within the fenced-in



area while on the playground. Additionally, please make sure when dropping off and picking up your child that you and your child remain on the walkway inside the playground and do not go into the woodchip area to play, or collect leaves or seeds. Thank you for helping to keep our students safe.

The School will be closed on Wednesday, November 11th, for Veteran's Day. We will also be closed on Thursday,

the 26th, and Friday, the 27th, for Thanksgiving.

School Shirt Day will be on Friday the 20th this month. Let's make it 3 months in a row of 100% school participation!

Conferences will take place the week of November 30th for Mrs. Wildhaber's class, and the week of December 7th for Ms. Tinajero's class.

A Report from Mrs. Wildhaber's Class

While our classroom may be small, it is bustling with activity. Every day the kiddos do independent work until 8:45. This is a time for them to settle in with materials they feel comfortable with and practice new skills. This also allows me time to check in arriving kiddos without having to constantly interrupt new lessons. Watching the kiddos take out big activities during this time is amazing to see. They are not shying away from materials that take an incredible amount of focus and body control, such as the decanomial square, skip counting with long chains, coloring and labeling continent maps, or writing in their booklets. By the time I start giving daily lessons, they have warmed up for the day and are ready for new challenges! I am constantly surprised by the progress and drive of the kiddos in class. In



just a month, the class has gone from one book reader to four! More and more kiddos are getting their first writing booklet and practicing writing sounds or words in cursive as well.

My graduates are learning to pair the sounds a letter makes with the name of the

letter. For example, the phonetic "C" sound (said like the first sound in the word cake) is named the letter "C" (pronounced see). Additionally, they are associating cursive letters with printed letters using specific classroom activities.

Almost all the kiddos have really taken a shine to working on the color by number or dot to dot papers I started printing out each month. The children are in no way required to do these papers. However, once they see a classmate do one, the rest of the class seems to want to challenge themselves with the papers as well. They are only allowed to do one monthly paper a day, to reinforce taking their time with connecting the dots or coloring the image.

Another thing that has been so amazing to see is all the art sharing. It has become a daily thing for a child to draw or paint a picture to gift to another child. To watch the time and effort the kiddos are putting into creating art for another is quite the sight.



Before closing out, I would like to thank everyone who brought items for our second annual hygiene drive during Red Ribbon Week. We were able to gift two very full grocery bags to the Church for them to distribute to homeless shelters and refugee camps.

The kiddos did a great job of sharing ways to keep our bodies healthy throughout Red Ribbon Week. We had a lot of fun talking about fruits and vegetables. The kiddos also had a good laugh when I talked about how important it is to drink plenty of

water to make sure it does not hurt to pass waste out of our bodies. But as some of the kiddos have experienced constipation, I felt it was important to let them know it does happen to people and that lots of water and juicy fruits help to soften and smooth the waste as it passes out of the bodies. Additionally, I was super impressed with the exercises the kiddos came up with for keeping our bodies fit. I usually get answers like running and riding a bike. This year the kiddos shared exercises like pushups, down dog, chin-ups, and jumping jacks. Way to keep fit!

Until Next Month,
Mrs. Wildhaber and Miss McCray

P.S. I would also like to thank everyone for sharing how much they appreciated the in-class Halloween celebration. I love Halloween very much and really wanted it to be as special as it could be for the kiddos.

A Report From Ms. Tinajero



Ms. Tinajero

October was a very busy month and we had a great time. I was out for a few days getting my wisdom teeth removed, but the children stayed very busy with their work. When I came back to the classroom I quickly noticed a lot of

improvement from the lessons they worked on while I was out. This allowed me to give more lessons, which the children were extremely excited about.

On October 15 we had the Great California Shake Out. I was very impressed by how all the children did, even our newest friends that joined this year. On this day we were also able to paint our pumpkins, which was our art and craft prize for getting 100%

participation on School Shirt Day in September. The children also made 100% participation for the month of October.

That Friday we had Picture Day, which also went very well. Our garden made a wonderful backdrop for our school pictures. Thank you Ms. McCray for watering our garden!

We had Red Ribbon Week the last week of the month, for which we highlighted healthy choices. The children and I talked about how we can keep our bodies healthy inside and out, and what type of foods we can eat to keep our hearts healthy as well. The children brought in items for our hygiene drive, which was partnered with the Altadena Community Church.

Our Halloween celebration wrapped up the month. The children were able to do a physically distanced “Trick or Treat” in the classroom with the goodies they brought in.

We have also kicked off our Fundraiser with a huge thanks to Lou’s mom Allison, for taking on the task of keeping our Fundraiser organized. Our classroom has 100% participation in the Fundraiser and we are hoping to make some big sales with the help of your family and friends.



Day-Care Centers Are Very Low Risk for Covid-19 Transmission, Study Says

by Robbie Whelan, October 14, 2020, WSJ

Children in day-care programs present virtually no risk of transmitting Covid-19 to adults, according to a new [Yale University study](#) of more than 57,000 U.S. child-care providers.

The study, believed to be the largest of its kind, indicated that keeping child-care centers open doesn't contribute to transmission of the disease caused by the new coronavirus, as long as they hew to sanitary guidelines like hand washing, small group sizes and staff wearing face coverings.

The research has broad implications for the U.S. economy, parents who depend on day-care centers and child-care workers. More than a third of child-care centers in the country closed between March and July, according to Child Care Aware, an advocacy group.

A June survey by the National Association for the Education of Young Children found that child-care center enrollment fell by 33% nationwide and that 70% of providers reported that parents told them they weren't comfortable sending kids back to day care.

"For parents, it might be a little bit of cold comfort, because they're worried about their particular child," said Dr. Walter Gilliam, a child psychologist at Yale and lead author of the study, published Wednesday in the journal *Pediatrics*. "But it's clear that child care doesn't pose a threat to communities."

Risk of infection for child-care professionals appears to be comparable with that for the broader population. The Yale study sought to control for factors such as the level of infection in the community where each center was located, as well as the gender, age and ethnicity of providers.

"It doesn't appear that working in child care leads to the spread of Covid-19," Dr. Gilliam

said. "It is true that many child-care providers did get sick. Many of them even went to hospitals. But it was not the contact with children in child care that seems to be the source of that infection."

The paper adds to growing research showing that young children aren't major vectors in Covid-19 transmission, said Dr. Kristin Moffitt, a physician at Boston Children's Hospital and professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School.

Scientists aren't sure why children under the age of 10 seem less likely to spread the virus, but some theories have included a smaller viral load in their airways, smaller fluid droplets expelled when they cough or sneeze, or simply that small children are closer to the ground and thus less likely to transmit particles to adults' airways. Most day-care centers go up to ages 5 or 6.

Outbreaks have been more common among high-school and college students, in part, scientists believe, because they are more independent than young children and interact more with peers.

"You would think that day cares would be hotbeds, but they're not, and this study is consistent with that," Dr. Moffitt said. "The younger the age of the population, the less they seem to be contributing to transmission."

The Yale study "provides a very important window into a crucial topic" and was conducted with a solid methodology, said Renee Boynton-Jarrett, a professor of pediatrics at Boston University School of Medicine. Both Drs. Moffitt and Boynton-Jarrett read prepublication copies of the study, though

neither was involved with its peer-review process.

Dr. Boynton-Jarrett cautioned that the Yale study doesn't indicate that children in day cares are immune to the disease, although most research shows that adults suffer from more intense bouts of Covid-19 than most children. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 296 children under the

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age of 14 had died from the infection through Oct. 7, or 0.14% of total U.S. deaths.

Survey responses in the study indicated that most professional child-care centers have rigidly observed guidelines like mask wearing, hand washing and contact tracing, the authors noted. While all day-care programs have low transmission rates, adults involved in home-based child-care programs were slightly more likely to become infected than those working in commercial day cares, the study said.

The Olive Treehouse Group, a network of three private preschools in Brooklyn, N.Y., with a total capacity for 90 children, closed its doors between March 13th and July 22nd. During that time, parents permanently pulled 25 students from the schools and the group lost 40% of the year's revenue, its executive director, Ashley Sobel, said.

Many parents who used to send their kids to the school described anxiousness around the uncertainty caused by various state and local orders to close, reopen and modify service at schools and child-care centers, Ms. Sobel said. Many of these parents pulled their kids from child care as a result.

Last week, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo declared child-care centers to be essential services and said they wouldn't be ordered closed again. The move has prompted a flood of returning parents, Ms. Sobel said, and the Yale report will come as good news to them.

"Some families wanted to get back to the pre-shutdown normalcy as quickly as possible but a lot of them fear that second wave and anticipate another shutdown," Ms. Sobel said.

Some parents, like Tzur Frenkel, an engineer who lives in Pittsburgh, have already adjusted to the new normal and are unlikely to be swayed by new research.

In March, the day care at a nearby synagogue attended by Mr. Frenkel's two children, then 5 and 3 years old, closed its doors. The children are still at home, even though most child-care centers in the city have reopened, and the family has struggled to rearrange its schedule around child-care needs.

Mr. Frenkel's wife, a pharmaceutical researcher, is pregnant—considered a high risk case for Covid-19 by public health officials—and they worry one of their children could bring the infection home from day care.

"We didn't want to take any chances," said Mr. Frenkel. "We decided it's not worth the risk, even though there are a lot of benefits to day care."

Write to Robbie Whelan at robbie.whelan@wsj.com



Are The Risks of Reopening Schools Exaggerated?

From *NPR*, Anya Kamenetz, 10/21/2020

Despite widespread concerns, two new international studies show no consistent relationship between in-person K-12 schooling and the spread of the coronavirus. And a third study from the United States shows no elevated risk to childcare workers who stayed on the job.

Combined with anecdotal reports from [a number of U.S. states](#) where schools are open, as well as a crowd sourced dashboard around 2000 US schools, some medical experts are saying it's

time to shift the discussion from the risks of opening cash 12 schools to the risks of keeping them closed.

"As a pediatrician, I am really seeing the [negative impacts](#) of the school closures on

What we found is that the school [being opened] makes absolutely no difference.

Enric Álvarez, researcher at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

children," Dr. Danielle Dooley, a medical director at Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C., told NPR. She ticked off mental health problems, [hunger](#), obesity due to inactivity, missing routine medical care and the risk of child abuse — on top of the loss of education. "Going to school is really vital for children. They get their meals in school, their physical activity, their health care, their education, of course."

While agreeing that emerging data is

encouraging, other experts said the United States as a whole has made little progress toward practices that would allow schools to make reopening safer — from rapid and regular testing, to contact tracing to identify the source of outbreaks, to reporting school-associated cases publicly, regularly and consistently.

"We are driving with the headlights off, and we've got kids in the car," said Melinda Buntin, chair of the Department of Health Policy at Vanderbilt School of Medicine, who [has argued](#) for reopening schools with precautions.

Emerging Evidence

Enric Álvarez at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya looked at different regions within Spain for his [recent co-authored working paper](#). Spain's [second wave](#) of coronavirus cases started before the school year began in September. Still, cases in one region dropped three weeks after schools reopened, while others continued rising at the same rate as before, and one stayed flat.

Nowhere, the research found, was there a spike that coincided with reopening: "What we found is that the school [being opened] makes absolutely no difference," Álvarez told NPR.

Spain does extensive contact tracing, so Álvarez was also able to analyze how much schools are contributing to the spread of the coronavirus. Álvarez said his research suggests the answer is: not much. He found that, for all

the students and staff who tested positive, 87% of them did not infect anyone else at the school. They were single cases.

"We are not sure that the environments of the schools may not have a small and systematic effect," said Álvarez, "But it's pretty clear that they don't have very major epidemic-changing effects, at least in Spain, with the measures that are being taken in Spain."

These safety measures include [mask-](#)

[wearing for all children older than 6.](#)

ventilation, keeping students in small groups or "bubbles," and social distancing of 1.5 meters — slightly less than the recommended 6 feet in the United States. When a case is detected, the entire "bubble" is sent home for



quarantine.

Insights for Education is a foundation that advises education ministries around the globe. For their [report](#), which was not peer reviewed, they analyzed school reopening dates and coronavirus trends from February through the end of September across 191 countries.

"There is no consistent pattern," said Dr. Randa Grob-Zakhary, who heads the organization. "It's not that closing schools leads to a decrease in cases, or that opening schools leads to a surge in cases."

Some countries, such as Thailand and South Africa, fully opened when cases were low, with no apparent impact on transmission. Others, such as Vietnam and Gambia, had cases rising during summer break, yet those rates actually dropped after schools reopened. Japan, too, saw cases rise, and then fall again, all while schools were fully reopened. But the United Kingdom saw a strong upward trend that started around the time of reopening schools.

"We're not saying at all that schools have nothing to do with cases," Grob-Zakhary said. What the data suggests instead is that opening

schools does not inevitably lead to increased case numbers.

What About The U.S.?

On Oct. 14, the Infectious Diseases Society of America gave a briefing on safe school reopenings. Bottom line? "The data so far are not indicating that schools are a superspreader site," said Dr. Preeti Malani, an infectious disease specialist at the University of Michigan's medical school.

One place in the U.S. where systematic data gathering is happening — Utah — seems to echo the conclusions drawn by the new international studies. Utah's [state COVID-19 database](#) clearly reports school-associated cases by district. And while coronavirus spread is relatively high in the state, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson believes that schools are not, for the most part, driving spread.

"Where you see cases on the rise in a neighborhood, in a county, we see that tend to be reflected in a school," Dickson said. "[But] we're not seeing spread by virtue of being in school together."

Tom Hudachko of the state's health department said that after both colleges and schools reopened in early September, there was a rise in cases among the 15-24 age group. But with targeted public health messaging those cases have started to come down.

For the most part, Hudachko said, K-12 school clusters have been concentrated at high schools. "We have had some outbreaks in middle schools. They've been far less frequent. And elementary school numbers seem to be one-offs here and there."

And these clusters — including [one large reported outbreak](#) with at least 90 cases — have largely been traced to informal social gatherings in homes, not to classrooms. (Álvarez, in Spain, also said that clusters among young people there have been traced to social gatherings, including rooftop and beach parties).

Few states are reporting school-related data as clearly as Utah. And that's a shame, said Buntin at Vanderbilt. "One might argue that we're running really a massive national experiment right now in schools," Buntin said, "and we're not collecting uniform data."

The [largest centralized effort](#) at such data collection in the United States — the unofficial, crowdsourced [COVID-19 School Response Dashboard](#) — has gotten a lot of publicity. But it

is self-reported, not a representative sample of schools.

Buntin and other experts said it's likely that the dashboard is biased toward schools that are doing an exemplary job of following safety precautions and are organized enough to share their results. Also, the dashboard doesn't yet offer the ability to compare coronavirus cases reported at schools with local case rates.

In the absence of data, there are scary and tragic anecdotes of [teachers around the country dying](#) of COVID-19. But it's hard to extrapolate from these incidents. It's not immediately clear whether the educators contracted the virus at school, whether they are part of school-based clusters, or what safety precautions were or were not followed by the schools in question.

A [recent study](#) from Yale University could potentially shed some light on these questions. It tracked 57,000 childcare workers, located in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, for the first three months of the pandemic in the United States. About half continued caring for very young children, such as the children of essential workers, while the other half stayed home. The study found no difference in the rate of coronavirus infections between the two groups, after accounting for demographic factors.

Walter Gilliam, lead author of the study and a professor of psychology at the Yale Child Study Center, cautioned that it's difficult to generalize this report to a K-12 schools setting, because the children were mostly under the age of 6 and kept in very small groups — and, he said, the childcare workers were trained in health and safety and reported following strict protocols around disinfection. However, he said, "I think it would be great to do this study with school teachers and see what we can find out."

Risk and benefit

When you add up what we know and even what we still don't know, some doctors and public health advocates said there are powerful arguments for in-person schooling wherever possible, particularly for younger students and those with special needs.

"Children under the age of 10 generally are at quite low risk of acquiring symptomatic disease," from the coronavirus, said Dr. Rainu Kaushal of Weill Cornell Medicine. And they [rarely transmit it either](#). It's a happy coincidence, Kaushal and others said, that the youngest children face lower risk and are also the ones who have the hardest time with virtual learning.

"I would like to see the students, especially the younger students, get back," said Malani at the University of Michigan. "I feel more encouraged that that can happen in a safe and thoughtful way."

Chicago Public Schools, one of the largest districts in the country, seemed to take that guidance into consideration when it [announced recently](#) a phased reopening starting with pre-K and special education.

Kaushal said it's important to keep in mind that Black, Latinx and Native American communities are much more severely affected by COVID-19. And that many of the "children that are at the severest risk of disease, are also at the severest risk of not having a school open, whether it be for food security, adult time, security, losing the time to learn or losing the skills that they have acquired over the last year or so."

Any decision made on school reopening, she said, has to focus on equity as well as safety. There are no easy trade-offs here.

Let us give the child a vision of the whole Universe..... The Universe is an imposing reality, and an answer to all questions. We shall walk together on this path of life; for all things are a part of the Universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity. This idea helps the mind of the child to become fixed, to stop wandering in an aimless quest for knowledge. He is satisfied, having found the universal center of himself with all things"

-To Educate the Human Potential, Dr. Maria Montessori

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