We are learning more every day regarding COVID-19 in children. We are using the latest research to help NC make decisions about how we should operate our schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to follow new data and science as it is available to learn more. The current research summarized below still presents an early and limited picture of children and schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Be sure to check back for regular updates by visiting https://www.nc.gov/covid19.

Children appear to be less likely to acquire and spread COVID-19 than adults.
- Children, particularly younger children, appear to be less likely than adults to become infected with COVID-19, even after being exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Young children can spread the virus, however children under 14 years of age may be less likely to spread COVID-19 to others when compared with older teens and adults.
- Newer findings suggest that younger children may be more likely to get COVID-19 from an adult than to spread infection to adults.
- Spread of COVID-19 is much more likely within a household than not within a household (e.g., in schools)

Most children have very mild illness, but while rare, some children can develop severe symptoms. We are learning more about children who are at higher risk for severe illness.
- Children infected with COVID-19 generally have mild or no symptoms.
- Although rare, children can have severe disease. Those with underlying medical conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.
- Our African American and LatinX communities and children are disproportionally affected by COVID-19.

With prevention measures in place, increasing evidence suggests low rates of COVID-19 transmission in primary and secondary school settings even with high rates of community transmission.
- Little evidence that schools have contributed to increase rates of community transmission; countries that have reopened their schools did not see large rises in infection at a population level.
- Overall, studies in the US and internationally have demonstrated limited disease transmission from child-to-child and very limited to no transmission from child-to-adult in the in-person school setting.
- North Carolina’s ABC collaborative found rates of secondary transmission during in-person school instruction significantly less than the surrounding communities and no cases of student to staff transmission

Preventive measures are important to success of in-person learning
- School systems that had high rates of face covering and other preventive measures showed low rates of transmission
- Lower rates of transmission in schools than the community suggest schools can be a protective environment because of monitoring and adherence to prevention measures
- Higher rates of spread of virus have been seen in out of school social gatherings and sports
- Mask use and hand-hygiene remain critical prevention measures.
- CDC recommends 6 feet of social distancing as the most health-protective distancing, but where that is not possible, 3-feet or greater of social distancing may still reduce risk of spread.
Children may be less likely to have and spread COVID-19 than adults, but we are learning more about children’s ability to spread the virus

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- National Trends of Cases of COVID-19 in Children Based on US State Health Department Data Pediatrics, Sept 29, 2020
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