

Good Afternoon,

My name is Erica Moreno. I am a New Canaan resident and a mother to 2 children under the age of 5. Our preschool is licensed by the state of Connecticut and therefore these young children and staff are required to follow the mask mandates in place.

These mask mandates were never political for us until Governor Lamont chose to use our innocent children for financial gain. It is now political, our children are now political. **Up until two weeks ago, my husband and I were both registered as Democrats.** You can now find me listed as an Independent and my husband a Republican. At this point, I am not far behind my husband in completely switching my affiliation to Republican. These mask mandates and these continued extensions of emergency powers are what drove us to change our political affiliations. I think that goes to show just how important this topic is to many of us parents and how serious we are when it comes to protecting our own children.

What we are asking is really quite simple. We are not asking for a mask ban or saying we wouldn't consider masks if it was in our children's best interest. We are simply asking for parental control. Give us back the right to choose what is best for OUR children.

Each child is unique and special in their own ways. Some children can continue to thrive with a mask on and that is amazing, some need a mask for added protection because they are immunocompromised and for that I am grateful for the masks they can wear. However, we can't forget about the children who are suffering in other ways whether it be anxiety, depression, SPD or speech delays to name just a few. Despite these extreme challenges, they are being forced to carry a burden they are not responsible for carrying. We can't forget about children like my 3 year old whose face is still too small to properly wear a mask, whose baby skin is still so sensitive he's developing rashes from these masks and who's too young to understand, let alone fully communicate how COVID restrictions are impacting him.

Recently at school pick up, my son's teacher said he was refusing to remove his mask while outside. We got in the car and I took his mask off to discover it was because he was afraid to pull his mask down when he desperately needed a tissue. His nose was now running so badly he was hiding it behind his mask while outside. Another day, he told me at school he preferred to be outside in below freezing temperatures because he could breathe so much better vs when playing and learning masked inside. My son has swimming lessons every week and his instructor is required to wear a medical mask while swimming inside the pool. He can barely be heard by these children who he is teaching a true life survival skill to. A preventative for drowning which is one of the actual leading causes of death in our children. I personally know of 2 children who have drowned and 2 more children who have had very serious near drowning incidents and now have permanent brain damage. Meanwhile, the most extreme symptoms I've personally heard of from a covid positive child is a moderately high fever and a bad cold. Imagine how many lives we could actually save if we could put the time and focus that we are spending fighting over masks into drowning prevention, suicide prevention and even childhood cancer.

This is child abuse. Our children are not to use for your political gain. Please help us put an end to these emergency powers and mask mandates. Please, give us back the right to choose for our kids and allow us to help our children heal and breathe; physically, mentally and emotionally.

Thank you,  
Erica Moreno  
New Canaan, CT

(203) 912-1079