

## **Sara Atkins - Planning for Return to School – 9 July 2020**

Good evening,

I am a mother to a special needs child that goes to Crystal Bay.

My son has developmental disabilities and a compromised immune system.

I will be the first person to stress the need to protect children and reduce their exposure. However, going to school in a reduced capacity does not reduce the risk. Parents will find other means to have their child taken care of, which would actually increase the amount of people being exposed.

Children are, as we know, the least at risk of COVID. If schools are cleaned and proper safety measures taken, i think it is in the best interest of children to go back to school full time.

Things like temperatures being taken by parents before going to school. If at all possible, maybe keeping classes together and not mixing them with other classes. No big gym assemblies with the entire school. Rotating recess to separate classes. Field trips stopping. Less visitors in the school etc. There are many options to try to contain and protect kids while having them in school for 5 days.

Sending the kids back to school 2 or 3 days a week doesnt actually prevent the spread due to parents finding alternative care.

Children NEED consistency. They need socialization. They need learning.

Putting procedures in place to try to prevent any spread and for WHEN exposures happen is the best option.

My son will get any sort of illness if you walk past him sick and arent careful with the spread of germs, I know how quickly things spread. With the right precautions it in the best interest of children to return to their normal routines at school.

Their mental health and their learning is suffering. If parents and the schools can work together to ensure kids only go to school when they are NOT sick, this can work fine.