



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Statement from Senator Patty Ritchie

PATTY RITCHIE May 21, 2021



For more than a year now, children in childcare settings have not been required to wear face coverings. Now, as the pandemic subsides and mask mandates ease for adults, the state has a new target when it comes to its onerous COVID-19 mandates—toddlers.

The Governor's announcement that children over the age of two are now required to wear facemasks at all times in daycares, preschools and summer camps—except for when eating, drinking or sleeping—is in a word, illogical. The science shows children are not at risk for serious side effects if they were to contract COVID-19. Moreover, the vaccine is now widely

available for adults working in childcare settings.

These sudden changes were made without input from the childcare community, or parents. Since the announcement of these new guidelines, my office has been inundated with calls and emails from parents who are deeply concerned about the impact this requirement will have on their children, their health and their development.

As a parent and grandparent, I share their concerns. Forcing children over the age of two to wear a mask—when they haven't had to for more than a year—simply does not make sense. The voices of our parents and childcare providers need to be heard and the Governor and Department of Health need to act immediately to reverse course on this unreasonable requirement.