



345 Park Blvd
Itasca, IL 60143
Phone: 630/626-6000
Fax: 847/434-8000
www.aap.org

March 15, 2022

Executive Committee

President

Moira A. Szilagyi, MD, FAAP

President-Elect

Sandy L. Chung, MD, FAAP

Immediate Past President

Lee Savio Beers, MD, FAAP

Secretary/Treasurer

Dennis M. Cooley, MD, FAAP

CEO/Executive Vice President

Mark Del Monte, JD

Board of Directors

District I

Wendy S. Davis, MD, FAAP

District II

Warren M. Seigel, MD, FAAP

District III

Margaret C. Fisher, MD, FAAP

District IV

Michelle D. Fiscus, MD, FAAP

District V

Jeannette "Lia" Gaggino, MD, FAAP

District VI

Dennis M. Cooley, MD, FAAP

District VII

Gary W. Floyd, MD, FAAP

District VIII

Martha C. Middlemist, MD, FAAP

District IX

Yasuko Fukuda, MD, FAAP

District X

Madeline M. Joseph, MD, FAAP

At Large

Charles G. Macias, MD, FAAP

At Large

Constance S. Houck, MD, FAAP

At Large

Joseph L. Wright, MD, FAAP

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a non-profit, professional organization of 67,000 pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being of all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. The Academy achieves its mission through the provision of policy, education, and advocacy to enhance child health.

In clinics and hospitals throughout the United States, pediatricians are witnessing the immediate harms and risks that climate change poses to the health of their patients and families. Children, in particular, are uniquely vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change. Children's immature physiology and metabolism; critical windows of development; higher exposure to air, food, and water per unit of body weight; developmentally appropriate behavior patterns; and dependence on caregivers place them at much higher risk of climate-related health burdens than adults. For example, outdoor air quality that is worsened by climate change disproportionately impacts children's health because they spend more time outside than adults and their developing lungs are more susceptible to hazardous exposures, among other factors. Climate change can put children at a higher risk of heat-related illness, increase the incidence of asthmatic and allergic diseases, and contribute to the expansion of infectious diseases. Climate change associated weather disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, and floods pose a significant risk for children. In addition to immediate risks from weather disasters, such as death and injury, children may be impacted by displacement, interruption in education, disruptions in health care delivery, and mental health consequences, which can have lifelong impacts. Compounding matters, children from underserved communities and communities of color are often more susceptible to the health risks posed by climate change. Inadequate investments in these communities, structural racism, and proximity to other environmental hazards leave children at greater risk.

Pediatricians have a long history of advocating for social policies that protect the health and welfare of children. Informed by an understanding of the threat that climate change poses to current and future children, pediatricians are committed to playing a valuable role in the societal response to this global challenge. The AAP's "Global Climate Change and Children's Health" policy statement provides an organizational foundation for the Academy's commitment to address the causes and child health impacts of climate change. This AAP policy includes guidance specifically related to healthcare sector activities:

Recommendation 2: Seek ways to reduce the carbon and environmental footprint of health facilities, including hospitals, medical offices, and transport services. Consider ways to increase energy efficiency, incorporate renewable energy sources, reduce waste, and promote public and active modes of transport during new construction or remodeling.

The AAP is a recognized national leader in addressing the health needs of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. Over many decades of steadfast leadership, the AAP has earned a respected role as a public face for children's health and the profession of pediatrics. The AAP is committed to leveraging its strengths to help address the global child health threat of climate change.