

Michigan boy, 10, loses both hands, both legs to COVID-related MIS-C syndrome

Zac Corrigan
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Dae'Shun Jamison, age 10, of Shelby, Michigan, contracted COVID-19 in early December. Like most kids his age who catch the disease, he was initially asymptomatic. But after two weeks he developed headaches and a fever. His mother took him to the hospital on December 21.

He has yet to return home. For more than two months, Dae'Shun has undergone an unimaginable battery of surgeries and other procedures, including, tragically the amputation of both hands and both legs.

The diagnosis is Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children, or MIS-C, a life-threatening condition observed only in children with COVID-19. As their heart, kidneys and other organs become inflamed and dysfunctional, children with MIS-C suffer symptoms like gut pain, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, bloodshot eyes and fatigue. As of February 8, 2,060 children in the US have been diagnosed with MIS-C, and 30 of them have died as a result, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC).

In a harrowing series of updates on the family's GoFundMe page, Brittney Autman tells the story of her son's experience with MIS-C. Dae'Shun was initially put on a ventilator and dialysis machine, she writes, with "two tubes in each side of his lungs to release fluid from his body." Another "tube inserted into his pelvis led to his heart, filtering his blood."

On December 30, she writes that her son "will have to get his fingertips and toes amputated." Dr. Rosemary Olivero, a pediatrician at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids where Dae'Shun is being treated, explained to *Newsweek* that severe heart dysfunction occurs in some children with MIS-C, obstructing the flow of blood through the limbs and necessitating amputation.

On January 2, Autman notes that Dae'Shun "has had

6 units [pints] of blood after his procedures yesterday." She describes how "they cut his hands and legs to release pressure from the fluid in his body" and to "get some circulation going in his legs and hands." Soon, Dae'Shun's condition improved to the point where he was able to be taken off his ventilator and could answer yes/no questions by shaking his head.

But the improvements were not long lasting. By January 12, Autman had been informed that her son would need to have both legs amputated. Even worse, "because of his autism," she writes, Dae'Shun had "no clue of what's going to happen."

On January 15, his right leg was removed. By the time his second leg amputation was scheduled, he had also developed clots obstructing the flow of blood to both of his hands. His left leg and both hands were amputated on February 22. The next day, his mother wrote that the surgery went well and "they are trying to get his pain under control. Dae'Shun is very emotional about his amputations, and it breaks my heart."

Dae'Shun Jamison is one of the more than three million children in the United States who have contracted COVID-19. He and over 2,000 others have suffered MIS-C as a result, including 79 children in Michigan, according to the state's Department of Health and Human Services. Twenty-four Michigan children under the age of five have developed MIS-C, in addition to 31 children between five and 10 years old, like Dae'Shun, and 24 children age 11 or older, like Honestie Hodges, 14, of Grand Rapids, who died of MIS-C on November 22.

The actual prevalence of COVID among children—who, according to the CDC, account for some 13 percent of infections in the US—as well as the emergence of new and horrific conditions in children like MIS-C expose the two big lies that are being used

by the Biden administration to force schools back open for in-person learning across the country: (1) children do not contract and spread COVID in large numbers, and (2) if they do, they will not suffer horribly.

On February 16, while Dae'Shun was preparing for his triple amputation, President Biden held a town hall meeting dedicated to justifying the reopening of schools and businesses. On live television, the president smiled in the face of an eight-year-old girl named Layla and assured her and her mother that children were safe from the virus.

"My children often ask if they will catch COVID, and if they do, will they die," said Layla's mother as they stood together, maskless, in front of a microphone in the Pabst Theater in Milwaukee.

Biden's response was, "First of all, kids don't get COVID very often. It's unusual for that to happen.

"Number two," the president said, addressing Layla directly, "you're not likely to be able to be exposed to something and spread it to mommy or daddy, and it's not likely mommy and daddy are able to spread it to you either. So, I wouldn't worry about it, baby. I promise you."

These were the very lies used to keep schools open in Michigan during the time when Dae'Shun Jamison contracted COVID. As cases surged statewide, Governor Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, issued an executive order closing all high schools for in-person learning from November 18 through December 8, but allowed K-8 schools and day care centers to remain open.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) of Michigan union immediately endorsed the move and repeated the lie in a statement on their website: "Given lower transmission rates and greater need among younger students, whether or not K-8 education is face-to-face, virtual or a hybrid remains the decision of local districts."

This was at a time when, by the state's own count, there were 108 ongoing COVID outbreaks at K-8 schools in Michigan.

Dae'Shun Jamison's case makes it all the more painfully clear that children can and do contract, transmit, develop symptoms, suffer horribly and die from COVID-19. But the entire political establishment—from the Biden administration, to state and local officials, to the pro-capitalist unions like the

AFT—continue to propagate the lie that schools can be reopened safely while the pandemic is still raging. And they are dedicated to making this happen no matter the body count.

Stacked behind these lies, of course, are billions of dollars that stand to be made. The rich demand the return to in-person learning because they need it to ensure the continuous flow of profits into their bank accounts. If parents are to be kept in factories and other workplaces, their children must be at school.

How many more children will develop MIS-C and suffer a fate like that of Dae'Shun Jamison and his family? This depends entirely on the political mobilization of the working class, independent of and in opposition to the Democrats and the trade unions, to close schools and nonessential workplaces and stop the spread of COVID-19.

That is why the Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee is fighting to build an interconnected network of educators, parents and workers at schools and workplaces everywhere. For more information, visit wsws.org/edsafety.



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