

New York City parent victimized by Child Services denounces government after daughters contract COVID-19 at school

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New York City is seeing a new wave of coronavirus that includes the emergence of the BA.2 variant of Omicron. Earlier this winter, in the aftermath of the wave of mass infection of New Yorkers by the virus, New York City and the state altered the way in which they track COVID-19 infections in accordance with the practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The federal agency switched from direct reporting of community transmission to tying risk level to other factors, including hospitalization data. The outcome was that the threshold for alert was significantly raised everywhere. In the city, as a consequence, little data is available to track the spread of the disease and caseloads are almost certainly gross underestimates.

The widespread use of home testing kits—broadly encouraged by the state and city governments, as opposed to PCR testing—has also undermined the public’s ability to accurately ascertain the true level of transmission in the area, since home tests are less reliable than lab tests and since results go largely unreported to any data collection agency. Additionally, the New York City Test and Trace Corps, an agency created in 2020 in the initial phases of the pandemic, well known for its inefficiency to begin with, officially shuttered its doors this month, further impacting the centralized tally of infection. At least one child is reported to have died recently from the disease.

The city has been the center of a relentless campaign to numb the population to the danger of the virus in order to remove all mitigation measures which negatively impact big businesses. After indoor masking mandates were abolished in early March, including in schools, Democratic Mayor Eric Adams declared that

“[t]he best thing we can do to deal with COVID is get back to work ... Let’s get our city up and operating.” While Adams has temporarily backed off from removing a mask mandate for pre-K students in schools, the result of the disastrous policies of the city’s ruling establishment has been that New York is now undergoing a surge of infection, the true extent of which cannot be known until it is too late. Educators and parents are now reporting an increase in sicknesses in city schools on social media.

Mary, a parent of four who lives in Brooklyn, spoke with the *World Socialist Web Site* after two of her daughters came home from school ill this week with COVID-like symptoms. (Three of her children live at home, while the fourth is an adult who has moved out.)

In October of last year, Mary had been targeted in a political effort by the administration of former mayor Bill de Blasio to crack down on parents who resisted sending their children back to school due to COVID safety concerns. The Administration of Children’s Services (ACS) opened a child neglect case on Mary, which threatened to establish the legal basis through which she could have lost custody over her children.

In January, Mary was compelled to make the decision to send her children back to school in the face of the threat posed by ACS.

Mary has been a consistent opponent of the ending of remote learning in New York City schools, as well as the slashing of mitigation measures. She also has been an outspoken supporter of paid lockdowns for the working class in order to curb infection and save lives. During the Omicron surge this winter, she praised the courageous student walkouts and protests all over the city over COVID-19 safety in school buildings.

“On Sunday my twins started feeling ill. This week, they took take-home [COVID-19] tests, and they both came out positive. Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, my family has been extremely cautious. When the mask mandates ended, I told my kids that they had to keep their masks on in school. We don’t even go out to the grocery store.”

“I’m totally outraged about this. Only a few months ago, the government was telling me that I was mistreating my kids because I wanted to keep them home safe from a potentially deadly disease that they were doing nothing to contain. Now my children are sick with the very thing that I was trying to protect them from all along.

“By Wednesday night, my other child started showing symptoms as well, and my husband also started to feel sick. We’ve been isolating in separate rooms of our apartment. I’ve been stuck in the kitchen taking care of them by myself.

“I’ve communicated with other parents and teachers, and I’ve heard that students are now getting sick left and right. But the people in charge are just ignoring it as though it weren’t a problem—like it’s all just business as usual.

“Both [New York City Mayors] de Blasio and Adams were against keeping kids remote, but they weren’t really serious about policy to stop the pandemic spreading in school buildings. It was all a sham. Only a month after Adams got rid of the K-12 mask mandate, lying through his teeth that masking was somehow detrimental to children, now we’re at the beginning of yet another wave. Our kids are getting sick again. It’s completely, completely criminal.

“I read an article on the WSWS this week that pointed out that many politicians in Washington are now getting COVID themselves. In New York, Mayor Adams has it now, and this complete hypocrite gets to work from home while he condemns the rest of the population to suffer through it.

“All of this talk they’ve done in the news about ‘living with the virus’ is B.S. Having to worry like this all the time, with the brunt of the situation falling on regular working people and their children—this is no way to live.

“It is completely insane. Just feels like a bad dream. The lengths that the people in power will go just to keep people working at their low-paying jobs shows

that they have absolutely no concern for human life. They simply do not care.

“Working people are not faring well. We’re now stuck with the double whammy of having to worry about sickness and rising prices. It’s crazy that in a matter of weeks you can pay 25 percent more than you did before for the same amount of groceries, or gas in your car.

“Where is the money in society to help people? The American government can spend billions of dollars on weapons abroad, but it can’t even ensure a decent quality of life for people in its own country. It’s no conspiracy theory to say that it’s all about profits and money.

“We need social programs that actually work. Pay people to stay at home, feed their kids and stay safe. Pass out differential payments to offset rising food and fuel prices. Keep schools remote. Save lives and end the pandemic once and for good.”



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