

# Parents Win Battle to Reopen California Playgrounds

On December 3rd, California Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a new stay-at-home order mandating, among other restrictions, that outdoor playgrounds be closed. This prompted an immediate backlash from parents, medical professionals, and some state legislators who insisted that outdoor play for children is not only safe but essential for children's health and well-being. The parent pushback worked, with Newsom backpedaling last week and reopening playgrounds.

This is an important example of the vital role parents play in opposing government lockdown orders and related restrictions that defy science and can cause more harm than good—especially for children.

*Good news, kiddos! ☺☺*

*Keep fighting, parents! ☺☺*

*California playgrounds to stay open amid COVID restrictions*

*#OpenCalifornia #OPENAMERICANOW <https://t.co/BdOmRHgAq8>*

*— Politically Stripped™ ☺☺☺ (@politstrip) December 9, 2020*

## Parents Are Getting Frustrated

While many parents appreciate the need to be vigilant as some areas experience a surge in coronavirus cases this month, they seem to be growing weary of new government orders and limitations that they see as arbitrary and unscientific, such as keeping malls open while closing playgrounds.

The hypocrisy of elected officials is also grating.

“... as new restrictions take effect, those who have followed the rules say they are having an increasingly hard time taking orders from politicians who don't always seem to heed their own advice,” the *Los Angeles Times* reported following Newsom's playground closures.

“Angry parents pointed to Gov. Gavin Newsom's attendance at a birthday dinner at the French Laundry in Napa Valley, even as he was warning against Thanksgiving dinner gatherings; L.A. County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl dining out in Santa Monica hours after voting last week to uphold a ban on outdoor dining; and state lawmakers flying to Hawaii last month to schmooze with interest groups while health officials were discouraging

travel.”

Despite its strict lockdown orders, which are currently among the most severe in the country, coronavirus is spreading rapidly in California. As FEE’s Jon Miltimore explained, lockdowns have been shown in several studies to be ineffective at reducing the spread of the coronavirus. Instead of lockdowns, the clear age-related mortality risk of COVID-19 makes it most conducive to a “Focused Protection” pandemic response that protects elderly and vulnerable populations while avoiding the harms that lockdowns are causing the young, including the rising mental health crisis among children and young adults.

Dr. Jay Bhattacharya of Stanford University and Sunetra Gupta of Oxford are two of the co-authors of the Great Barrington Declaration that prioritizes focused protection and warns against lockdowns. They wrote in Friday’s *Wall Street Journal*:

*“At least 99.95% of people under 70 survive infection; that figure is only 95% for 70 and older. Covid-19 is thus especially deadly for the old and others with chronic conditions. But the lockdowns are deadly as well. The harms include plummeting childhood vaccination, worse cardiovascular disease outcomes, and less cancer screening, to name a few. It’s impossible to quantify the total deaths they have caused and will cause, but it’s safe to conclude that for people under 70 without chronic conditions—especially children and young adults—Covid-19 is far less deadly than a lockdown.”*

## **Resistance Grows**

With recent warnings from public health officials such as Anthony Fauci suggesting that pandemic-related restrictions could last into next fall, more Americans are resisting. Some business owners are openly defying lockdown orders or are operating underground, determined to keep their enterprises afloat so that they can pay their bills and serve their customers. Civil disobedience continues to spread, as citizens rise up against mounting government coercion and control.

Parents are increasingly part of this resistance. They see how lockdowns and related policies are negatively affecting their children, who are at very low risk from COVID-19 but high risk from the collateral damage that lockdowns cause. Some of them have had enough of the government overreach.

Yoko Goodman is a California mother who says she was appalled when the state closed

playgrounds and is angry about the lockdowns and restrictions. “We were upset when the playgrounds were closed in open air. Those yellow tapes (‘keep off’) were symbols of control,” she told me in a recent interview. “It’s common sense that kids need fresh air, to move muscles, mingle with other children. I was appalled to see them limit children’s movement. The whole thing is ridiculous. After all, this is part of America I fell in love with and left Japan. I don’t want to see America like this! I never felt policies directly affecting our lives.”

Another California mother, **Bretigne Shaffer**, has been opposed to the state’s lockdown policies and restrictions from the beginning of the pandemic, and is encouraged that the recent playground closures prompted more parents to speak up and take action against these government orders. “Over the past year, Californians have learned that the people who rule over us will not be stopped by the laws of science or economics, and certainly not by any concern for our most basic rights and freedom,” Shaffer told me. “The only way we will get our lives back is by pushing back against this obscene power grab—so congratulations to everyone who did that here, and we need to keep it up!”

As government restrictions tighten in many locations, and more **mandates** loom in 2021, public dissent and defiance may become increasingly important. The parents who successfully pushed back against playground closures prove that individual actions can lead to meaningful change.