



June 2025
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Advocating for Kids

AAP Advocacy Guide

We wanted to provide you with a link to the whole virtual AAP Advocacy Guide (AAP login required).

<https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/aap-advocacy-guide/>

Spotlight on a Member

In Memory – Dr. Evelyn St. Clair

We would like to remember Dr. Evelyn St. Clair for her many years of providing care to children in the Treasure Valley. Her legacy will continue in her patients.

Insights on Idaho's Physician Shortage

Dr. Perry Brown is a much-loved pediatrician, the director of Full Circle's pediatric residency program, a founder of St. Luke's Cystic Fibrosis Center of Idaho, and a member of the Idaho Coalition for Safe Healthcare. Please take a few minutes out of your day to listen to his incredible insights about Idaho's physician shortage in this [episode of The Ranch podcast](#) called "Why Doctors are NOT Choosing Idaho".

Spotlight on a Member

ICAAP Chapter Leadership Candidates

We are excited to propose the following slate of candidates for officers for the Idaho AAP from July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027. You will be receiving a ballot mid-June.

Dr. Tom Patterson – President

Dr. Tom Patterson grew up in Arizona and attended the University of Arizona for Undergraduate, Medical School and Pediatric Residency. He decided on Pediatrics early in his fourth year of medical school as he kept being pulled towards the care of children. For the past 22 years Dr. Patterson has served both the local and national chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics, where he has held several leadership roles throughout his tenure. He thrives in caring for the underserved and has a longstanding passion for the interface of mental illness and pediatrics. He works with Autism Echo Idaho to spread knowledge of autism and is working to spread knowledge on Trauma Informed Care.

He enjoys travel with his wife and family, weight training/fitness, hiking, swimming and the outdoors. He is happiest when he is spending time with his wife and now adult children!

Dr. Brian Birch – Vice President

Dr. Brian Birch was born and raised in Western Washington. He first came to Idaho during his training as a medical student at the University of Washington. He completed his residency at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville, TN, and returned to the Gem State to begin his career.

Dr. Birch has been caring for children in Idaho for over a decade. He is actively involved in the AAP at the state and national level. Currently he attends the executive committee of AAP SOAPM (Section of Office Administration and Practice Management) as the Jill Stoller Scholarship Recipient. When he is not seeing patients or dreaming up his next big clinic project he can be found running in the foothills, skiing at Bogus, and spending quality time with his children, Elie and Perry, and his wife, Ayla.

Dr. Joe Wilbanks – Secretary-Treasurer

Joe Wilbanks, MD FAAP is a general pediatrician working in Nampa, Idaho. He has lived in the state for five years and is looking forward to the opportunity to play a more active role in state advocacy. He is currently the ICAAP EHDI/Sound Beginnings chapter champion and serves as a board member for the Idaho Voices for Children. Joe enjoys being outdoors and resides in Boise with his partner and two rowdy boys.

Upcoming Educational Opportunities/Meetings/Events

Idaho Breastfeeding Coalition Board Opportunity

The Idaho Breastfeeding Coalition is looking for a pediatrician who would be willing to join their board. Board members are requested to serve at least a 2-year term if possible. They ask candidates to email a resume along with a letter of intent. For the letter of intent, they ask candidates to review the 5 focus areas of the coalition listed on their website and speak to what calls to them. Once they receive those 2 things, they will schedule an interview time. While they do want board members to help with the 5 focus areas, there are also some basic things that need to be accomplished in order to keep the coalition running smoothly; so a board member will be asked to help with a few of those as well. The coalition does their best to match those things to the individual's skill set.

You can send an email to Monica Smith, Board Chair at idahobreastfeeding@gmail.com, and here is link to the 5 focus areas. <https://idahobreastfeeding.org/our-board>

Upcoming Educational Opportunities/Meetings/Events (cont.)

Immunization Task Force

Dr. Lisa Barker is heading up a small task force to really focus on our low immunization rates and high exemption rates for kids in Idaho. Lisa would love to have 2-4 other physicians, nurses, residents or medical students join her in looking at ways to educate parents and caregivers, debunk myths and use social media. If you are interested, please contact Sherry by email or 208-867-3533. We hope to schedule a zoom meeting soon.

21st Annual Keeping Children Safe Conference

Save the date for this conference. It is scheduled for October 23. For more information, go to <https://www.idcartf.org/annual-conference>.

Resources

Public Health Survey

In the survey below, 80+% people still trust their pediatrician about vaccines and other health things as public trust in our federal health agencies erode.

We have unique opportunity in our profession to be a trusted source in vaccines locally.

<https://idahocapitalsun.com/2025/05/06/repub/nonpartisan-poll-finds-remarkably-low-trust-in-federal-health-agencies/>

Parental Protections Under the Law

Please see the attached informational sheet about Parental Protections Under the Law, provided to us by Andrea Rasmussen, Community Outreach & Resource Planning Specialist for the U.S. Department of Labor.

AAP Counters Misinformation with Fact Checked Site

The American Academy of Pediatrics published three new articles to dispel misinformation about vaccines on its [Fact Checked website](#) this week. Pediatric medical experts inform and review all information posted on these pages. Journalists are encouraged to share links to the articles in their news articles, broadcasts, and social media. The articles are:

- [Fact Checked: Vaccines Do Not Contain Fetal Cells, Thimerosal](#)
- [Fact Checked: Childhood Vaccines Are Carefully Studied—Including with Placebos—to Ensure They’re Safe and Effective](#)
- [Fact Checked: DTaP Vaccine Stops Spread of Whooping Cough](#)

For more information, contact AAP Public Affairs.

Prescription for Play

Become a Prescription for Play site. All program materials are free! Your enrollment includes DUPLO bricks, a virtual hub of program resources and trainings, implementation toolkits (manual, sample workflows and scripts), CME credits, technical assistance, enduring educational content and program support. For more information or to enroll, go to <https://www.rx4play.org>.

Oral Health Update

Please find attached the Idaho Oral Health Alliance News for May 2025 titled “Insight on Recent Reports on Fluoride and Community Water Fluoridation”.

Synopsis of CFRT Suicide Reviews

Report from Idaho Child Fatality Review Team

The Child Fatality Review Team recently reviewed 28 deaths by suicide in children under the age of 18 for the year 2023. The following trends were noted during the review:

--the most prominent means were gunshot wounds and hangings in approximately equal numbers. Other means were overdoses (two with bupropion), intentional carbon monoxide inspiration, and jumping from great height.

--age range was 13-17 years old; male/female ratio was approximately equal

--a prominence of cases was noted around holidays or school transitions (such as returning after a break)

Practice-changing suggestions from this review:

1. Many teens had their phone/device taken away as discipline shortly before the suicide occurred; this is an ongoing trend that has been noted in the past. The phone is often a means of support or a way of processing stressors for teens; removal may functionally socially isolate them. Caution well-meaning parents regarding removal of phones/devices for disciplinary reasons, poor grades, overuse, etc. Device removal occurred within hours to days prior to suicide in a majority of the 2023 cases.
2. Consider filling only #30 pills each month for kids on medication as dispensing #90 increases the chance of having a lethal dose available. Remind families to dispose of all discontinued medications.
3. Many of the teens were initially found by a sibling post-suicide. If you are working with a family dealing with a recent suicide, they may not tell you this as it is traumatic but make certain to offer and recommend counseling.
4. Some teens had chaotic homes, mental health history, prior abuse (sometimes only confided to a friend who disclosed this post-suicide). However, in other cases there appeared to be no warning signs and parents had no concerns; in these cases, the team felt there actually were warning signs that the family had not recognized. If a parent seems to have no concerns, but the PHQ-A or C- SSRS (or your gut!) says otherwise, explore further. There may be things a parent is not aware of, or the parent may have their own issues that prevent them from recognizing what their teen is dealing with or keep the teen from bringing things up.

-V. Susan Bradford, MD, Affiliate Faculty, Pediatric Residency of Idaho;
bradsusa3@gmail.com

Book Corner

The Baby Bonding Book – Connecting with Your Newborn

In *The Baby Bonding Book*, pediatrician and neonatologist Joanna Parga-Belinkie, M.D., FAAP, helps new and expecting mothers focus on what is most important: building a relationship with their newborn. The book explores how delivery, breastfeeding, crying, and sleep are the building blocks of bonding, safety, and attachment. Dr. Parga-Belinkie also offers an impassioned defense and helpful explanation of the recommended interventions and immunizations for all newborns. [Order the book here.](#)