

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing to you to share my experience of living in this pandemic with special needs children and working parents. I am a mother of 4, 3 of which are special needs. My oldest is 11 years old and has autism. Last Saturday November 14, 2020 I took my children with me to Kroger's in Newark. I was verbally attacked when I walked in the store by another customer. I was attacked for myself and my children not wearing masks when we are medically exempt. Due to this attack I was forced to leave because my children were mortified. I have fought hard to make sure my children know how important it is to know the facts about COVID-19. My son doesn't understand why others think he is a bad person because he simply cannot wear a mask. Now before any assumptions are made my husband and I have tried to work with our children on masks but sensory wise it is too much. My oldest son picks his skin to the point there are holes in his skin. My 9 year old daughter cries, she can't breathe. My 8 year old son has eczema so bad licking his lips in the winter gives him a rash from his nose to his chin any material will irritate it. I also have a 2 year old that doesn't tolerate anyone wearing a mask as he cannot see anyone's face. He is non verbal so facial expressions are very important for him.

We were forced to homeschool our children this year due to masks. While our school (Par Excellence Academy) has been great they are stressed and stretched beyond belief. A disease that has a survival rate in the high 90th percentile we have to protect everyone from but the flu and pneumonia every year it's fair game? School is. It just to learn the book work but to also learn social interaction. How can a child learn social interaction behind a screen? How can a child learn facial expressions when it's hidden behind a mask. Why is it acceptable that a physical disability is excused but just because you can't see the disability it doesn't exist? My husband worked for a business that crumbled during the shut down. A car dealership that should be an essential with more than 40 years of service and it was forced to shut its doors.

Sent from my iPhone