



CDC Renewed Call to Action: Add Routine Vaccinations to the Back-to-School Checklist

Late summer is usually a time many families begin preparing to send their children back to school. This is a crucial time when healthcare providers need to communicate with families to add routine childhood vaccinations, including the COVID-19 vaccine, to their back-to-school checklist.

CDC data shows that [kindergarten vaccination coverage](#) has steadily declined for all vaccines over the past two school years from 95% to 93% nationally and by as much as 10% in some jurisdictions. This is the lowest that we've seen kindergarten routine vaccination coverage drop nationally in the last decade. Adolescent [vaccination coverage](#) also fell for MenACWY and Tdap by 4-5% among teens born in 2008 who became eligible for the vaccine at the start of the pandemic. In 2022, several communities in the U.S. responded to outbreaks of measles where children were hospitalized, and another community reported a case of paralytic polio in an unvaccinated person. These recent outbreaks and data underscore that under- and unvaccinated children are at risk for serious illness.

With a near-complete return to in-person learning, efforts must be made to ensure:

- All school-aged children are up to date on all ACIP recommended routine vaccines, including vaccines not required for school entry such as flu, HPV, and COVID-19 vaccines.
- All children have equitable access to routine vaccines, and vaccination coverage is sufficiently high to protect children, their families, and their communities against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Although coverage has declined in recent years, we can get back on track and achieve the [Healthy People 2030](#) target of 95% routine kindergarten vaccination coverage by ensuring all kindergarteners without a documented exemption are vaccinated. Healthcare providers are trusted sources of information for parents and guardians. They can also help families make the informed decision to vaccinate.

Here are some ways that healthcare providers can help catch school-aged children up on vaccination.

Remind families about vaccines that are due or required for school entry

- Send reminders to families whose children are behind on well-child visits and routine vaccinations
- Display back-to-school vaccination [communication materials](#), such as 8.5" x 11" flyers and social media posts on your practice website and social media channels.

Help share the facts

Catch-up vaccination will require efforts from healthcare systems, healthcare providers, schools, state and local governments, and families to share the facts about routine vaccines by using resources such as CDC's

[Frequently Asked Questions for Routine Immunizations, Quick Conversation Guide on COVID-19 Vaccines for Children](#), and [how to address misinformation](#).

- **Facts about routine vaccines**
 - Here are the [facts about routine vaccines](#).
 - Vaccines are [safe and effective](#) for your child to receive at the recommended age, and at the recommended dose.
 - Did you know your child may be eligible for free vaccines? CDC's [Vaccines for Children](#) (VFC) program helps provide free vaccines to children who qualify.

- **[Facts about School Attendance and Good Health](#)**
 - In 2019, more than 6.5 million children in the United States, approximately 13% of all students, miss 15 or more days of school each year.
 - Infectious diseases, such as flu and other vaccine preventable diseases, contribute to school absenteeism.
 - Routine vaccinations are one tool to help [promote school attendance](#) to keep kids healthy, in school, and ready to learn.
 - Encouraging parents to vaccinate their children may reduce disruptions to childcare and in-person learning and activities.

Make [strong recommendations](#)

- Use every visit – including well-child checks, sports physicals, and other appointments – as an opportunity to recommend and administer all vaccines that are due or might have been missed because of pandemic-related disruptions.

Help make vaccines more accessible

- Offer vaccination-only appointments or hold vaccination clinics.
- Administer COVID-19 vaccines at the same time as other routinely recommended vaccines, if recommended and appropriate.
- Consider partnering with schools to offer school located vaccination clinics and offer all ACIP recommended vaccines for school-aged children.

For additional information, tools, and resources to support getting all children caught up on their routine vaccinations, check out CDC's [Let's RISE](#) webpage.

Help us protect children by doing what you can to get kids caught up on recommended vaccines.

Sincerely,



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