

The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

We must have a plan to vaccinate kids

April 22, 2021

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As one of my colleagues organized her COVID-19 vaccination recently, her six-year-old daughter stomped a foot and loudly asked “What about *us*?”

Indeed, what about them? On Monday, every adult in the country became eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. But as usual, kids have been left out of the mix. First Focus on Children has presented the Biden Administration with [a few ways to solve this](#).

The problem: Vaccine-hesitant adults — the 20% of the population who plan to refuse the vaccine unless forced — have shifted the burden of herd immunity to our children. In addition to being unfair, this selfish act places our children in mortal danger and ignores a central fact: There is no vaccine for children.

The solution: Continue to support the rapid development of a children’s vaccine and [be ready to distribute it by creating a national plan tailored to the specific needs of children](#).

The challenges: Let’s start with the fact that kids can’t drive, so they can’t just take themselves to a vaccination site. Add to that:

- Vaccine-hesitant caregivers
- Racial inequities in vaccine distribution and use
- The perception that COVID-19 does not affect children.

The imperative:

- **Funding:** Set aside funds from the American Rescue Plan specifically to design and implement a children’s vaccination program.
- **Distribution:**
 - Create a detailed plan to make vaccines available at child care facilities, schools, community health centers, recreation centers, youth sports venues and other places where children spend their time.
 - Make special provisions to reach children with disabilities and chronic conditions, as well as children in congregate care and juvenile detention settings.
- **Outreach:**
 - Launch a public education campaign aimed at overcoming vaccine hesitancy and the perception that children are not affected by COVID-19.

- Address systemic inequities by targeting a diverse representation of community leaders trusted by parents, grandparents, and caregivers.
- Reach out to immigrant communities, including translation of materials into the top 15 non-English languages spoken in each state.

The background:

- **Impact of COVID-19 on kids:**
 - More than [3.5 million children](#) have tested positive for COVID-19 and nearly [300 have died](#).
 - More than [40,000 children have lost a parent](#) to COVID-19 so far
 - Increased child poverty, with increases [particularly acute for Black and Hispanic individuals, as well as for children](#).
 - Rampant hunger with [13 million children \(1 in 6\) projected to experience food insecurity in 2021](#).
 - For more on this, see our fact sheet, [The REAL Impact of COVID-19 on Kids](#)
- **State of kid vaccines**
 - Pfizer's vaccine has been found [safe and effective](#) in children aged 12 to 15.
 - Both [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) and [Moderna](#) are testing their vaccines in children as young as six months.
 - Dr. Anthony Fauci has said he expects [all kids to be able to receive a vaccine by early 2022](#).

The time bomb: School

The pandemic has already disrupted every aspect of our children's lives. Record numbers of [children are failing classes](#). [Mental health crises](#) among young people have soared. We cannot get kids safely back in school – i.e. back to something resembling normal life – unless they are protected from this virus, as the adults in their lives are.

The conclusion: The Administration must be ready to distribute a children's vaccine as soon as one is available, especially to those who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its economic, social and emotional fallout. [For more on how all this would work, check out our letter to the Administration](#).

And please feel free to reach out directly to me by email, text or phone for more information.

Best,

Michele Kayal

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