

Ways Schools Can Support Routine Vaccination Catch-Up Among School-Aged Children: A TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

July 2023



Background

Vaccination is crucial for the health and well-being of students, families, teachers, and school staff. Routine vaccines and school vaccination requirements protect school communities against vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks keeping children in school and ready to learn, and supporting schools' operational, fiscal, and academic goals by maximizing student attendance. Drops in vaccine coverage place students and staff at increased risk of illnessⁱ, including serious illness, and absenteeism^{ii iii iv}. This, in turn, can negatively impact school operations and contribute to students falling behind on social, emotional, and academic milestones.



Kindergarten routine vaccination coverage in the United States is the lowest it's been in the last decade. During the two school years following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, routine [kindergarten vaccination coverage](#) dropped by two percentage points nationwide from 95% to 93% and by as much as 10% in some jurisdictions. Approximately 250,000 kindergarteners are potentially not protected against measles with MMR vaccination coverage being 93%. [Influenza vaccination coverage](#) also dropped five percent among children 6 months to 17 years old during the same time period.

Call to Action

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) calls on [healthcare providers](#) and [education professionals](#) to support school-aged children to catch up on their vaccinations. Education professionals such as superintendents, school administrators, school nurses, and *all* school health staff are trusted leaders within their communities and have unique opportunities to support families and help ensure children are up-to-date and in compliance with school vaccination requirements. While school vaccination requirements are [established and vary by state or local jurisdictions](#), CDC encourages schools to increase awareness about the benefits of all Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended vaccines, including those that are not required for school entry such as flu, COVID-19, and HPV vaccinations.

How to Use this Toolkit:

To support partners in this effort, CDC developed a playbook, [Let's RISE \(Routine Immunizations on Schedule for Everyone\)](#), that contains evidence-based strategies and CDC tools and resources to get routine immunization coverage back to or ideally above pre-pandemic coverage. This toolkit, developed by the [Public Health Foundation \(PHF\)](#) in collaboration with CDC, is a companion resource that brings together additional actionable tools that can be used by education professionals to get childhood

vaccination rates back to pre-pandemic levels. Resources contained in this toolkit are compiled from professional education organizations and school health partners, state and local health departments, public health partners, and government organizations (Appendix A). Jurisdiction-specific resources are included as examples of tools and communication materials that are currently being used to get kids caught up on routine vaccines.

The toolkit is organized around five evidence-based strategies for strengthening vaccination coverage; 1) promoting vaccination in back-to-school communication; 2) empowering trusted messengers with information and guidance to improve vaccine-related conversations; 3) sending reminders to families whose children are behind on routine childhood vaccinations; 4) expanding access to immunization services for students; and 5) utilizing school vaccination data for action. Educational professionals can use these strategies and resources in multiple settings, such as schools and school-based health centers, to increase routine vaccination coverage among school-aged children. Resources in this toolkit can be downloaded, adapted, and shared with your school community and include parent handouts, communication assets such as newsletter blurbs and social media content, conversation guides, and school-located vaccination guides.

About PHF

The Public Health Foundation (PHF) is a national, non-profit organization whose mission is to advance the public health workforce to achieve organizational excellence. For more information, visit phf.org.

Funding for this toolkit is made possible through cooperative agreement OT18-1802, Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services through National Partnerships to Improve and Protect the Nation's Health from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Table of Contents

Additional Immunization-Related Toolkits for Education Professionals	4
Strategy 1	5
Strategy 2	8
Strategy 3	10
Strategy 4	11
Strategy 5	13
Appendix A: List of Organizations Cited for Resource Compilation	15

Additional Immunization-Related Toolkits for Education Professionals

[Addressing the Decline of Vaccination Rates of U.S. Students: A Toolkit for Educational Leaders](#)

- This comprehensive toolkit from [The School Superintendents Association](#) provides resources to support educational leaders in understanding and providing direction on how schools and districts can address the problem of vaccination declines among students. It includes six modules that address a variety of essential questions, including the [need for catch-up](#), what districts and school leaders can do to [increase staff understanding](#) of the implications of lower vaccination rates, and how to engage [parents, families](#), and [community partners](#) in efforts to increase vaccination rates.

[Childhood Vaccine School Nurses Toolkit](#)

- This comprehensive toolkit from the [Washington State Department of Health](#) provides materials and resources to help educational leaders promote childhood vaccines, answer parent questions, and more. While this resource is specific to the state of Washington, many of the materials can be downloaded, adapted, and/or utilized by schools outside of the state of Washington.

[Shots for School Toolkit](#)

- This comprehensive toolkit from [California Department of Public Health](#) provides materials to support educational leaders including [implementation, promotion, and communication tools](#) for schools, [trainings](#) on how to become a school immunization champion, and a [school-specific immunization coverage](#) data visualization tool. Although this resource is specific to California, it provides a good example of the many types of materials and resources to assist education professionals in strengthening their schools' vaccination coverage.

Strategy 1

Promote vaccination in back-to-school communication for families

Back-to-school communication and school events are a unique opportunity to encourage vaccination awareness, share school vaccine requirements, and provide facts about vaccines with families and prospective families. Communication is often even more successful when parents receive consistent messages from multiple sources and channels including from the school district, school leader or school nurse, and local health department. Consider downloading, adapting, and sharing the below resources in-person, on your district or school websites, through your school social media channels, or develop your own materials from these examples.

Sample Letters

School administrators can download, adapt, and brand these letters with their school or district logo for dissemination

- [School Vaccination Reminder Letter - Washington State Department of Health](#) (see page 5)
- [Back-to-school Vaccination Catch-up - California Immunization Coalition](#)
- [Adolescent Back-to-school Vaccination Letter](#)
- [Childcare Center Vaccination Catch-Up Letter - California Immunization Coalition](#)
- [School Vaccination Clinic Letter - Washington State Department of Health](#) (see page 6)

Parent Handouts

School administrators and school health services staff can share facts and answer frequently asked questions about childhood vaccines by including links to vaccine handouts in school digital communications or by printing and sharing copies of handouts with families directly.

Factsheets

- [Reliable Sources of Immunization Information: Where Parents Can Go to Find Answers - Immunize.org](#)
- [All About the Recommended Immunization Schedules - American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [Vaccine Safety: Get the Facts - American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [10 Ways to Separate Vaccine Fact from Fiction - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [Top Ten Reasons to Protect Your Child by Vaccinating - Immunize.org](#)
- [Vaccines for Teens - UNITY Consortium](#)

- [Did You Know Your Child Can Get Free Vaccines? - CDC Factsheet](#)

Frequently Asked Vaccine Questions and Answers

- [Why Immunize Your Child - American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

Digital and Social Media Assets

School administrators can browse, upload, and post these shareable images, sample social media messages, and infographics for parents and guardians on your district or school website and/or social media channels.

- [2023-2024 Back to School Let's Catch Up - CDC](#)
- [#DontWaitVaccinate School Aged Children - California Immunization Coalition](#)
- [The Power to Protect Campaign: Digital and Social Media Toolkit 2023 - Learning First Alliance](#)
- [#DontWaitVaccinate Adolescents - UNITY Consortium](#)
- [Fight Flu-Don't Let it Stop You - CDC](#)

Posters/Flyers

- [2023-2024 Back to School Let's Catch Up - CDC](#)
- [Flu Season Is Here Poster - UNITY Consortium](#)

Robo Call and Robo Text Messages

- [School Robo Calls Template - California Department of Public Health](#)
- [If Only You Could Vaccinate \(Teen\) - UNITY Consortium](#)

Translated Materials

- [Translated Materials Library - National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants](#) (Choose Topic "Prevention: Vaccine, General")

Choose Topic “Prevention: Vaccine, General”

Health Education > Translated Materials Library

Translated Materials Library



The Translated Materials Library offers fact sheets, posters, videos, audio recordings and other resources in English and more than 100 languages free of charge. These materials come from organizations across the country working to communicate effectively with RIM communities. NRC-RIM has worked hard to compile and organize these materials, though we cannot guarantee their quality.

Acknowledgement: This resource leverages and builds upon the work of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance to collect these resources early in the pandemic.

Language + Search ... Resource Type +

1 - 16 / 8106

Language	Topic	Resource Type	Source (Organization)	Source (Geographic)	Link	English (Reference)	Date Added
Bengali	COVID: COVID 101	Poster	Bangladesh Medical Association of North America	2-National Org	Link to Material		12/11/2020
Arabic	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020
Chinese, Simplified	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020
English	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material		12/11/2020
Farsi	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020
French	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020
Haitian Creole	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020
Hindi	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020
Portuguese	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020
Spanish	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020
Swahili	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020
Tagalog	COVID: Website	Website	California - Hesperian	1-State or Local	Link to Material	Link to Material	12/11/2020

Search dropdown items: Other: kamaoan (14), Other: Tobacco (7), Prevention: Cover Cough (15), Prevention: Facemask (306), Prevention: Social Dist... (179), Prevention: Stay Home (170), Prevention: Stop Spre... (652), **Prevention: Vaccines, G... (96)**, Prevention: Wash Han... (170), Quarantine: Exposed to ... (1), Quarantine: Exposed to ... (1), Quarantine: Exposed to ... (77), Quarantine: Feeling Si... (190), COVID-19 vwebsite

Strategy 2

Empower trusted messengers with information and guidance to improve vaccine-related conversations

How education professionals talk to students, parents, guardians, and families about vaccines is a crucial component of improving vaccine coverage, increasing vaccine confidence, and building trust. Use these resources to help school staff talk to parents about routine vaccines and promote health literacy.

Conversation Guides for Building Vaccine Confidence

These resources offer tips and techniques to support more productive conversations and communications about getting kids vaccinated. While some were developed for COVID-19 vaccines, the strategies can be used for all vaccines.

- [Building Family Confidence in the COVID-19 Vaccine: Framing Strategies for School Nurses - FrameWorks Institute, National Association of School Nurses, and Institute for Educational Leadership](#)
- [Reframing the Conversation About Child and Adolescent Vaccinations - American Academy of Pediatrics and FrameWorks Institute](#)
- [HPV Vaccine Conversation Guide - CDC](#)

Responding to Frequently Asked Questions

These resources offer information and communication strategies that educational professionals can go to for guidance crafting responses to parents/guardians frequently asked questions about vaccines.

- [Frequently Asked Questions - Voices for Vaccines](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions: Adolescent Vaccines - UNITY Consortium](#)

Addressing Misinformation and Disinformation

These resources offer credible websites, organizations, and communication strategies that educational professionals can go to for guidance on crafting responses to misinformation and disinformation.

- [The Debunking Handbook 2020 - George Mason University](#)
- [Need Help Responding to Vaccine-Hesitant Parents? - Immunize.org](#)
- [Vaccine Hesitancy Toolkit - Voices for Vaccines](#)
- [Vaccine Misinformation Guide - UNICEF](#)
- [Vaccines and Immunization: Myths and Misconceptions - World Health Organization](#)

- [Vaccines: The Myths and the Facts - American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology](#)

Inviting Professionals to Speak to School Staff and Families

- [COVID-19 Speaker Guide for School Administrators - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

Additional Resources for School Nurses

- [Immunization Resources – National Association of School Nurses](#)

Strategy 3

Send reminders to families whose children are behind on routine childhood vaccinations

Schools and school-based health centers can use immunization reminders to notify families whose children are not up to date on school-required vaccinations.



Schools

- [Sample Immunization Notification Letter and Packet for Non-Compliant Students - District of Columbia Department of Health](#)

School-Based Health Centers

- [Reminder and Recall Strategies - American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

School administrators and school health service staff can help make vaccination easy and accessible for all students by sharing information about where qualified families can access free routine childhood vaccinations as well as COVID-19 and flu vaccines. Schools can also expand access by partnering with vaccinators that can offer offsite community vaccination days or support school-located vaccination clinics at the start of the school year. This can help ensure that all non-exempt students are up-to-date and in-compliance with school requirements. While some were developed for COVID-19 vaccines, the strategies can be used for all vaccines.

Free Vaccines for Children

- Factsheet: [Did You Know Your Child Can Get Free Vaccines? - CDC](#)
- Factsheet: [School-Based Health Centers \(for Parents\) - Nemours KidsHealth](#)
- Check with your [health department](#) to see if they have a list or map of Vaccines for Children (VFC) provider sites (e.g., [Washington State Department of Health VFC Provider Locations](#))

Vaccine Locators - To help families find convenient vaccination locations

- Find a [community health center](#) near you
- [Vaccines.gov - Search for COVID19 vaccine locations](#)
- [Vaccines.gov - Search for flu vaccine locations](#)

Community Vaccination Days

- Contact, or use relationships with, relevant immunization programs and [health departments](#) to determine if they can offer community vaccination days during summer camp activities and the week(s) prior to and after the first day of school.

School-Located Vaccination Clinics

Toolkits

- [Advancing Health Center and School Partnerships to Improve Vaccination Administration for Children and Adolescents - School Based Health Alliance and National Association of Community Health Centers](#)
- [School-Located Vaccine Clinic Toolkit for Schools TK-12 - County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health](#)

- [School-Located Vaccination School Nurse Planning Checklist - Association of Immunization Managers and National Association of School Nurses](#)
- [School-Located Vaccination Clinics - Best Practices for School Districts: A Guide for School District Administrators - CDC](#)
- [School-Located Vaccination Clinics Toolkit - Association of Immunization Managers](#)
- [School-Located Influenza Vaccination Toolkit - National Association of City and County Health Departments](#)
- [School-Located Vaccination Clinics Practices, Policies and Lessons Learned for COVID-19 and Influenza - National Association of School Nurses and Association of Immunization Managers](#)

Additional Resources

- [Delivering Services in School-Based Settings: A Comprehensive Guide to Medicaid Services and Administrative Claiming - Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services](#)
- [Development of Memorandums of Understanding for School-Based Health Program Partnership](#)
- [School-Located Vaccination Clinic Toolkit: Robo Call Scripts and Newsletter Blurbs](#)
- Handout for parents: [After the Shots...what to do if your child has discomfort - Immunize.org](#)

Strategy 5

Utilize school vaccination data for action

Education professionals and school administrators can use [health department](#) and/or school data to better understand declines in vaccination coverage and prioritize vaccination support and outreach in schools with lower coverage.

CDC recommends using the following action plan for data informed outreach:

- 1) Leverage existing data and school vaccine coverage maps
- 2) Identify schools with lower vaccination coverage
- 3) Prioritize outreach to schools with low or declining school vaccination coverage
- 4) Engage with school administrators and health services staff to determine why school vaccination coverage may be low
- 5) Develop a plan to support those schools and families to get caught-up to strengthen school vaccination coverage

Consider using a data informed outreach strategy if school vaccination coverage data for your area is publicly available. See this example of how this strategy could be done using California Department of Health public data published as a part of their [Shots for Schools](#) initiative.

Shots for Schools – California

Data Informed Outreach

1. Leverage existing data and school vaccine coverage maps

How Is Your School Doing?

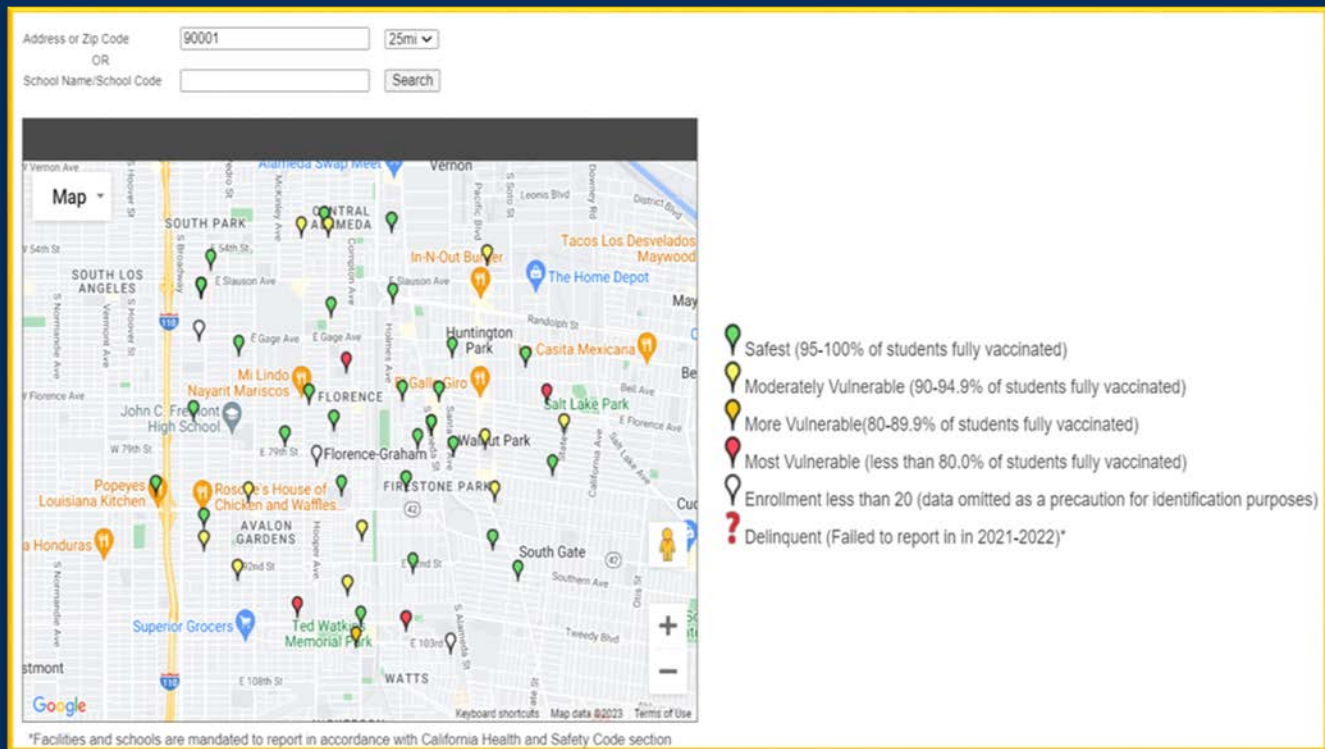


Child Care

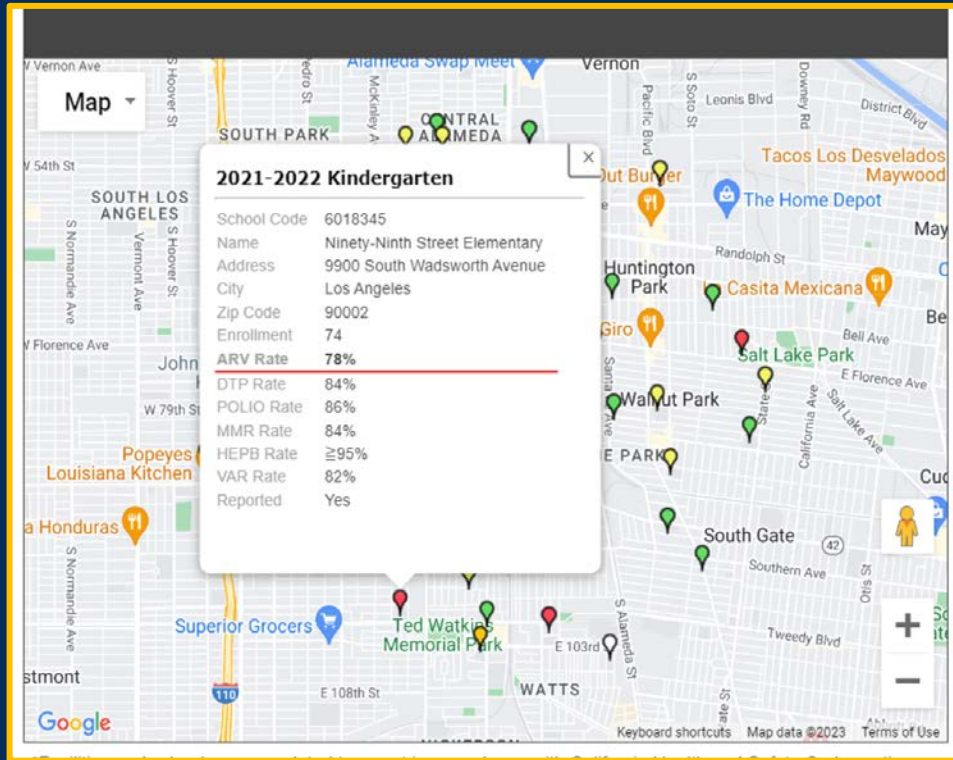
Kindergarten

7th Grade

2. Identify schools with lower vaccination coverage. For example, using California's visualization tool, schools with red and orange pins have vaccination coverage below 90%



3. Prioritize outreach to schools with low or declining school vaccination coverage



4. Engage with school administrators and health services staff to determine why school vaccination coverage may be low

5. Develop a plan to support schools and families to get children vaccinated

Education professional associations and school health partners

- Institute for Educational Leadership
- Learning First Alliance
- National Association of School Nurses
- Nemours KidsHealth
- School-Based Health Alliance
- The School Superintendents Association

State and local health departments

- California Department of Public Health
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- District of Columbia Department of Health
- Washington State Department of Health

Public health professional organizations and partners

- Association of Immunization Managers
- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- California Immunization Coalition
- FrameWorks Institute
- Immunization Action Coalition
- National Association of Community Health Centers
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants
- UNITY Consortium
- Voices for Vaccines

National and international governmental organizations

- United States Department of Health and Human Services
- UNICEF
- World Health Organization

Universities

- George Mason University
- University of Minnesota

ⁱ Sinclair, D. et al. 2019. Forecasted Size of Measles Outbreaks Associated with Vaccination Exemptions for Schoolchildren. *JAMA*. 2(8):e199768. doi:[10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.976](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.976)

ⁱⁱ Hull, H. and Ambrose, C. 2010. The Impact of School-Located Influenza Vaccination Programs on Student Absenteeism: A Review of the U.S. Literature. *The Journal of School Nursing*. 27(1) <https://doi.org/10.1177/10598405103891>

ⁱⁱⁱ Gicquelais R et al. 2016. Association of School-Based Influenza Vaccination Clinics and School Absenteeism—Arkansas, 2012-2013. *Journal of School Health*. 86(4): 235-241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12372>

^{iv} King, J. et al. 2012. Direct and indirect impact of influenza vaccination of young children on school absenteeism. *Vaccine*. Volume 30, Issue 2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2011.10.097>