



CDC Call to Action: What Schools Can Do to Promote Routine Vaccination Catch-Up Among School Aged Children

[Vaccination coverage among kindergartners](#) remains at its lowest level in decades, having declined nationally from 95 to 93 percent during the two school years after the onset of the pandemic, including drops by up to 10 percentage points in some jurisdictions. This translates to up to 750,000 young learners that entered kindergarten during the pandemic who are potentially susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases. [Influenza vaccination coverage](#) has also dropped by more than five percentage points among children 6 months to 17 years old since the 2019-2020 school year. In 2024, communities in the U.S. are responding to an uptick in [cases and outbreaks of measles](#) where children have been hospitalized, underscoring that under- and unvaccinated children are at risk for serious illness. Decreased vaccination coverage coupled with increasing cases of vaccine preventable diseases like [measles](#), in turn, put students at greater risk for illness and absenteeism.

Routine vaccinations are a great tool to keep kids healthy, in school, and ready to learn. Vaccines can optimize student health by:

- Providing immunity and preventing disease outbreaks from beginning
- Reducing the spread of disease in school as part of an [infection prevention strategy](#) thereby reducing the:
 - Number of students and teachers that get sick and are absent
 - Probability of an unplanned school closure due to illness
- Reducing duration of disease and thereby number of school days missed due to poor health

Path Forward: Every Student Every Day

Although coverage has declined in recent years, we can get back on track to achieve the [Healthy People 2030](#) target of 95% routine kindergarten vaccination coverage by ensuring all kindergarteners without a documented exemption are vaccinated. Education partners and schools are trusted sources of information for parents and guardians, and they play an important role in the health of students. Schools can promote student health, attendance, and learning by adding routine immunizations to the back-to-school checklist.

Here are some ways that schools can help school aged children get back on track with their vaccinations:

1. Remind families with pre-school and school-age children about school vaccination requirements

As families begin preparing to send their children back to school, summer is an opportune time to communicate with families about school vaccinations.

- Check out CDC's [Let's RISE](#) webpage for immunization catch-up tools and resources.
- Provide vaccine information, stress the importance of vaccination, and give information on vaccine requirements for school entry to parents and guardians in back-to-school communications and events.
- Consider displaying or sharing CDC's back-to-school vaccination [communication materials](#), such as 8.5" x 11" flyers and social media posts, in schools or on your school websites and social media channels.
- Send reminders to families whose children do not have documentation of required vaccinations upon school entry.
- Consider promoting immunization as part of [September Attendance Awareness Month](#).

2. 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 and answer families' questions. It is important to strengthen awareness of all Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended childhood vaccines, including those that are not required for school entry, such as [flu](#), [COVID-19](#) and [HPV](#) vaccines.

- Help share the [facts about routine vaccines](#), including information about [vaccine safety and monitoring](#).
- Provide parents and guardians with a specific school contact who can address questions and concerns about vaccinations, such as a [school nurse](#).
- Equip school administrators and school health services [staff](#) with CDC's [frequently asked questions for routine immunizations](#).
- Alert school administrators and school health services staff to common [misinformation](#) circulating about routine immunizations and share resources on [how to address misinformation](#).

3. Expand access to immunization services for students

Community vaccination events held at a local health department or school campus can help remove logistical barriers and increase vaccine uptake. These can be open to students only or offered to teachers, families, and the greater community.

- Let qualified families know about receiving free vaccines through [CDC's Vaccines for Children program](#).
- Reach out to or use relationships with relevant immunization programs and [health departments](#) to determine if they can offer community vaccination days or school-located vaccination clinics during the week(s) prior to and after the first day of school.
- Reach out to local pharmacies and [Community Health Centers](#) to understand their vaccine supply and determine whether they can offer community vaccination days or school-located vaccination clinics during the week(s) prior to and after the first day of school.
- Expand school-based immunization services to children via school-located vaccination events or onsite provision of health services
 - View CDC guidance on school-located vaccination clinics: [CDC's Guidance for Planning Vaccination Clinics Held at Satellite; SLV information.pdf \(cdc.gov\)](#); and [SLV Clinics - Best Practices for School Districts: A Guide for School District Administrators](#).
 - Check out Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Department of Education's new [Comprehensive Guide to Medicaid Services and Administrative Claiming](#) on provision of and payment for Medicaid-covered health services, such as vaccination, in schools.

4. Share and utilize data for action

- Share school vaccination coverage data with health departments, as requested and allowable by state law. This data is used by health departments to provide resources and support to schools and education partners.
- Use school data to prioritize catch-up immunization in schools that have historically low coverage rates and where rates have declined the most during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Sincerely,



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