

8.17.26

Talking Points for Decline in Kindergarten Vaccination Rates:

- Thanks to vaccines, serious diseases that once made thousands of kids sick every year have become more and more rare. Declining vaccination rates among kindergarteners in the U.S. is a concerning sign that we are going backward on this progress.
- It's important to remember that the vast majority of parents continue to vaccinate their children. But we need very high vaccination rates to limit the spread of disease in our communities.
- **This data is important to understand our nation's and communities' protection against infectious diseases. AAP plans to analyze this data to understand where there are opportunities to strengthen community immunity. We want all children to have access to vaccines and to have safe place to learn.**
- Today's news comes at an especially concerning time for families. Our country is experiencing a 35-year high in measles cases. Whooping cough outbreaks are becoming more common. We are about to start cold and flu season as children head back to school.
- Right now, it is more important than ever for parents to hear clear, evidence-based guidance about how to keep their children healthy. Unfortunately, over the past year, leaders at the highest levels of government have continued to elevate false and misleading information about vaccines.
- It is no surprise that these rumors are now threatening our community immunity against diseases like measles and whooping cough.
- Today I want to remind parents to make sure their back-to-school checklist includes a visit to the pediatrician so you can ask if your child is up-to-date on their vaccinations.
- School is a place where kids play and learn alongside lots of other kids. They share everything—classrooms and crayons, but also germs.
- Staying up to date on vaccines prepares children's immune systems to recognize and resist serious diseases. On-time immunization keeps kids healthy, active and in school — and keeps our communities healthier. When more school kids have immunity, it's harder for contagious diseases to spread.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendations on vaccine timing is based on how kids' immune systems develop and learn. Vaccines work best when a child's body is best ready to respond.

- We know parents may be hearing a lot about vaccines in the news and online lately, which can feel overwhelming. If parents hear something that makes them curious or concerned about their child's vaccines, I encourage them to talk with their child's pediatrician to make sure they're getting trustworthy information that relies on science and evidence, not rumors.
- *IF ASKED about school requirements:*
 - o Contagious diseases spread quickly through the network of students, teachers, and families. That's why most schools require students to be up to date on routine vaccines before they enroll.
 - o A measles outbreak can lead to children missing school to schools to close