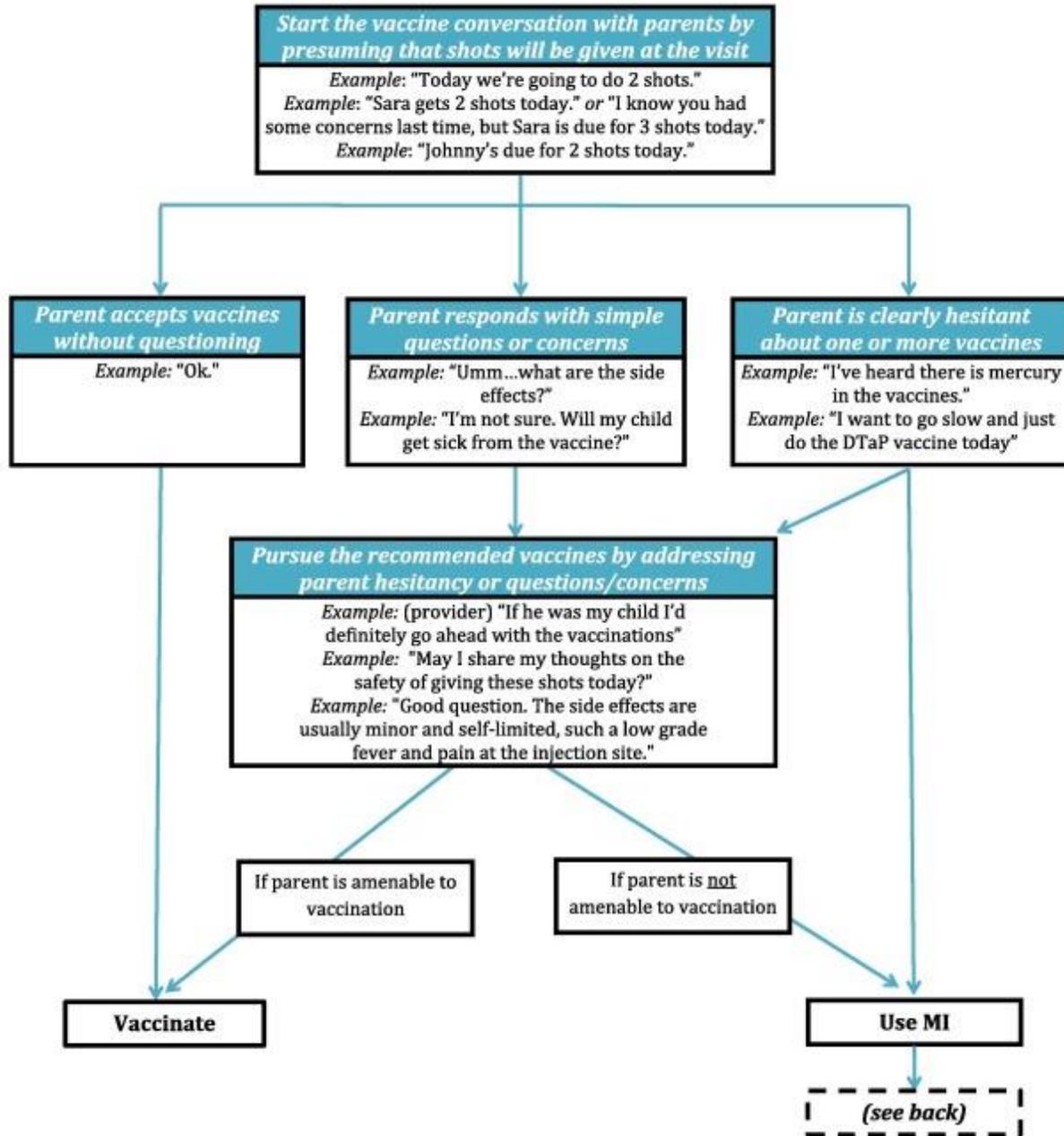




## A Provider's Guide to Vaccine Conversations with Parents



### Presumptive Pearls

Tone and body language matter. Don't make the presumptive format sound like a question. When delivering the presumptive format, make eye contact, square shoulders, and don't be distracted. Know what the child is due for before walking in the room.

You can use a presumptive format at a visit even though a parent has voiced resistance at a previous visit. (example: "I know we talked about vaccines last time, but I'd like to get her caught up today. She's due for 3 shots.")

Medical assistants and other staff who communicate with parents about vaccines should use the presumptive format too. (Example: "Sara is due for 3 shots today. I'll go ahead and get those ready.")

You can still use a presumptive format after an MA (or other staff) tells you the parent is hesitant.

Don't undermine the presumptive format by reverting quickly to a participatory format. After using the presumptive format, allow parents time to respond. Our natural inclination is to fill the silence. Try to resist this. (Avoid: "So, we're going to do 3 shots today, or... is that what you want to do?")

## Motivational Interviewing Skills

**Open-ended Questions:** helps explore and understand a parent's stance on vaccination

*Examples:*

- "Tell me more about what you already know?"
- "What might be one good reason to vaccinate your child today?"
- "In your mind, what is the harm if you choose *not* to vaccinate her today?"
- "What are some reasons for getting the vaccination?"

**Affirmations:** improves parent engagement in an open discussion with you by helping them feel supported, appreciated, and understood

*Examples:*

- "You are a good parent. Your concern shows how much you care about your child's safety."
- "You are a good mom and you care about your daughter's health."
- "You've always tried to be a good role model for your kids."
- "If you thought the vaccine was safe, you would not hesitate because you want what's best for your daughter."
- "It sounds like you're comfortable with the other vaccines."

**Reflections:** encourages partnerships, deepens rapport, and allows a parent to understand themselves and their motivations on a deeper level; reflections are particularly useful when encountering strong emotion or hesitancy

*Examples:*

- "You're frightened by what you've read on the Internet."
- "You're really worried and you want to make the best decision."
- "You're the type of person who really likes to do her research."
- "So it sounds like you're worried about the possibility that the MMR vaccine might cause autism."

**Ask Permission to Share:** puts parents in a less defensive posture and makes them more receptive to the information you'd like to share

*Examples:*

- "Could I provide you with some information based on what you just shared?"
- "Would you mind if I shared with you why I think this is such an important vaccine?"
- "May I share what I know about...?"
- "I have a different view, may I share it with you?"

- **Autonomy Support:** enhances a parent's sense of control and makes them feel more at ease with the conversation

*Examples:*

- "That said, this is a decision only you can make."
- "Only you can choose what is best for your child."

## MI Conversation Example

**Provider:** "You sound pretty certain that you don't want Johnny to get the MMR vaccine." (**Reflection**)

**Parent:** "No, I don't."

**Provider:** "Well, I just want to say right up front that this is your choice. My job is to share the best information I have about the vaccines to help with your decision, but you are the one who decides." (**Autonomy Support**)

**Parent:** "Ok."

**Provider:** "Tell me what you know about the MMR vaccine and autism." (**Open-ended Question**)

**Parent:** "Well, my cousin says that her daughter was fine until she got the MMR shot and I've read a lot about this on the Internet, too. How can it be a coincidence?"

**Provider:** "So, you have obvious doubts. Given your family experience and what you've read, I totally understand." (**Reflection, Affirmation**)

**Parent:** (nodding head) "I mean, really!"

**Provider:** "I've done some careful study of the MMR/autism connection and I have information that may help. May I share that with you?" (**Asks Permission to Share**)

**Parent:** "I guess."

**Provider** shares information about the negative association between MMR and autism and reinforces positives of getting vaccinated. Provider then ends with: "So what do you make of what I've shared?" (**Open-ended Question**)

**Parent:** "I'm not sure. I guess it makes sense though."

**Provider:** "Well, how would you like to proceed today?" (**Open-ended Question**)

**Patient:** "I don't know. (pause) I guess we can go ahead with it this time."