

Tips for Health Care Providers: Talking with Parents about Vaccines



Health care providers are parents' most trusted source of information. Follow the tips below to keep the conversation going about vaccines.

1. EXPECT PARENTS WILL VACCINATE

When discussing vaccines, remember that most parents want to vaccinate their children; be sure to use the presumptive approach. For example, instead of, "Have you thought about the shots your child needs today?" say,

"Your child needs three shots today: DTaP, Hib, and Hepatitis B."

2. GIVE YOUR STRONG RECOMMENDATION

Your recommendation is critical for vaccine acceptance. For example say:

"These shots are very important to protect your child from serious diseases. I believe in vaccines so strongly that I vaccinated my own children on schedule."

3. LISTEN AND RESPOND TO PARENTS' QUESTIONS

Building trust is an important part of parents following your recommendations. You can do this by:

- Approaching the conversation with empathy.
- Practicing active listening and validating their concerns.
- Scheduling an additional appointment to continue the conversation.

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4. DISCUSS LOW VACCINE CONFIDENCE OR THE REFUSAL TO VACCINATE

Work with parents to agree on at least one action, such as scheduling another appointment or encouraging them to read the vaccine information you provide. Continue to remind parents about the importance of an on-time vaccine schedule and work with them to catch their child up if they fall behind.

5. MAKE SURE VACCINATIONS ARE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE

Participate in the Vaccines for Children Program (VFC). VFC provides vaccines at no cost to children who might otherwise be unable to receive them because of an inability to pay. To learn more about VFC, visit njhis.nj.gov/docs/VFCBrochure.pdf.

6. ADDRESS BARRIERS TO VACCINATION

- **Psychological** – Discuss fears that patients have such as fear of vaccinations and needles; educate them about vaccine misinformation.
- **Physical** – Discuss alternatives for parents who work long hours or have transportation issues. Consider offering extended hours and/or hosting a vaccination event.
- **Missed Opportunities** – Vaccinate at every visit, not just well visits! Schedule the next vaccination appointment before the patient leaves.

For more information, visit bit.ly/3Rnfwta or scan the QR code.

