



Research Update



Survey: Pediatricians expect COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among parents

from [AAP Research](#)

A large majority of primary care pediatricians are providing COVID-19 vaccinations, but many expect to experience high levels of vaccine resistance among families, according to new data from the AAP Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study (PLACES).

From June to August, three-quarters of pediatricians in primary care reported that their main work setting is enrolled as a COVID-19 vaccine provider with their state, and 70% have started giving the vaccine to 12- to 18-year-old patients.

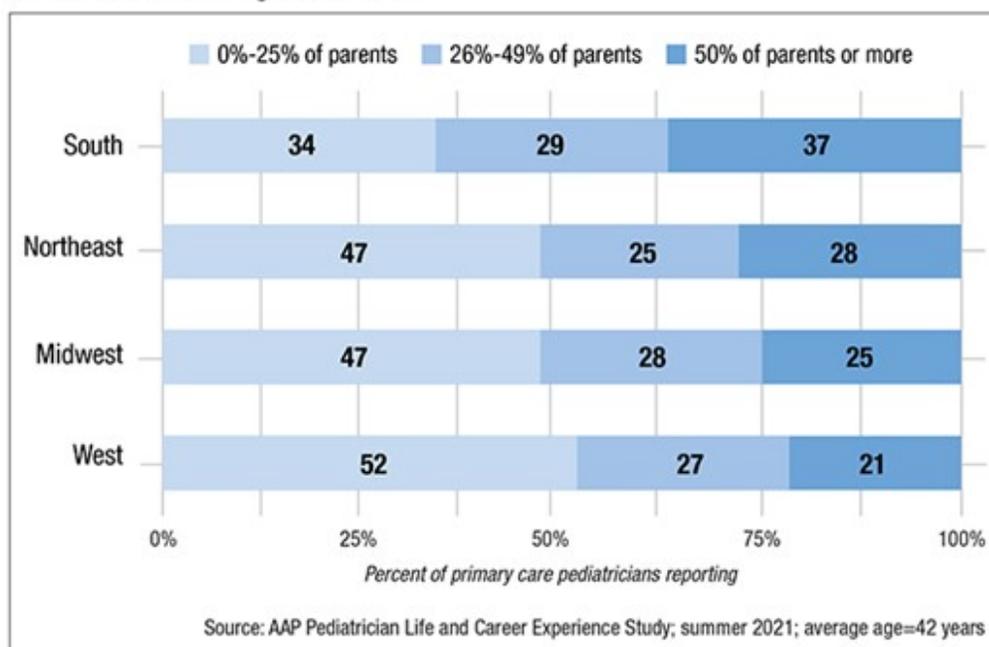
One in four primary care pediatricians estimate 50% or more of parents in their practice community will be extremely unlikely to vaccinate their 12- to 18-year-old children. Pediatricians in the South reported the highest estimates of resistance, with over a third reporting 50% or more of parents will be extremely unlikely to vaccinate (see chart).

In open-ended survey responses, pediatricians expressed they are encountering misinformation about COVID-19 and fears about vaccine side effects among their families. "There is so much bad information out there, people don't know what to believe," one respondent said. "They all say they don't want to experiment on their children who will likely have little to no symptoms if they are infected with COVID," said another respondent.

Pediatricians also reported on strategies being used in their practice community to vaccinate children against COVID-19, including talking with families and outreach efforts (see page 2).

"As the highly contagious COVID-19 delta variant surges with schools in session across the U.S., I am very concerned about the low COVID-19 vaccination rates in certain parts of the country and particularly among adolescents," said Sean T. O'Leary, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, vice chair of the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases. "AAP leadership values what we learn from PLACES participants and the dedication of pediatricians who are exhausted and frustrated by the pandemic but continue to provide families with accurate information about COVID-19 and encourage them to vaccinate their children."

Primary care pediatricians' estimates of percent of parents extremely unlikely to vaccinate their children against COVID-19



The COVID-19 survey was sent to 1,355 PLACES participants in June-August, and 67% responded; data still are being collected. Analyses in this article focused on 324 participants who provide primary care. The average age of respondents was 42 years old.

PLACES is an AAP cohort study that tracks the career and life choices and experiences of pediatricians across their careers. Cohorts include 2016-'18 residency graduates, 2009-'11 residency graduates and 2002-'04 residency graduates. Each cohort has 900 participants and includes both AAP members and nonmembers and general pediatricians, subspecialists and hospitalists.

RESOURCES

- [AAP COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign Toolkit](#)
- [AAP information on the COVID-19 vaccine for children](#)
- [AAP policy COVID-19 Vaccines in Children and Adolescents](#)
- For questions related to the pandemic email, COVID-19@AAP.org
- For more information on the AAP Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study, visit <https://www.aap.org/places> or contact Liz Gottschlich at 630-626-6627 or lgottschlich@aap.org
- [Additional Research Update columns](#)

Strategies pediatricians are using to vaccinate children against COVID-19

- “The most effective thing to decrease vaccine hesitancy has been having personal, one-on-one conversations between family and doctor.”
- “As with any vaccine, I note that making it personal to the patient is most effective. Also, informing them that I myself have received the vaccine as well as my own family members. This type of approach builds trust and helps the families make a better decision.”
- “We discuss it with every patient, and our practice is quite unique in its media presence. We have a Facebook page, Facebook live episodes, podcasts and a TikTok account that we use to provide regular information about vaccines and vaccine safety (and more!).”
- “We employed a combo effort. First, we did drive-through weekend vaccinations, which vaccinated about half of our (patients ages) 12-15. Then offered in-office appointments during the week, which covered about another 20%.”
- “Outreach clinics for vaccines. Webinars for information and parent questions.”
- “Recorded outreach calls from PCP to parents.”
- “We are texting families about vaccine availability.”