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## Documenting Refusal of Recommended Childhood Immunizations

All parents / guardians and patients should be informed about the benefits and risks of immunization. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly recommends, and federal law mandates, that this discussion include the provision of the Vaccine Information Statements (VISs). In addition to VISs, there are numerous other resources that provide evidence-based information to families to fight misinformation (see "[Immunization Resources for Parents / Caregivers](#)").

Providing parents / guardians with an opportunity to ask questions about their concerns regarding recommended childhood immunizations, attempting to understand parents' reasons for refusing one or more immunizations, and maintaining a supportive relationship with the family are all critical. The reasons behind vaccine hesitancy and strategies to combat it are further outlined in the AAP Clinical Report "[Strategies for Improving Vaccine Communication and Uptake](#)". This report also outlines the costs of vaccine refusal, shares common misconceptions, and provides strategies for addressing parental refusal, such as motivational interviewing. There are also numerous other immunizations resources for pediatricians the AAP has compiled into a "[Resources for Pediatricians: Parental Refusal to Accept Immunizations](#)".

Despite our best efforts to discuss the effectiveness of immunizations and the low risk of significant side effects from immunization, some families will still refuse to have their children immunized. In those cases, it is important to document the refusal of one or more recommended immunizations and attempts to counsel the family in the patient's medical record, including that they were provided with the appropriate VISs. To support this, the AAP has updated a [Refusal of Recommended Immunization form](#). This form can also be downloaded as a [word document template](#)\*. Changes can be made to this template document, but substantive alterations may not provide acceptable informed consent. If a parent refuses to sign such a form, such refusal should also be documented in the medical record.

The AAP also recommends that you revisit the immunization discussion at each subsequent appointment and carefully document the discussion, including the benefits to each immunization and the risk of not being age-appropriately immunized. A separate Refusal of Recommended Immunization form can be used for each discussion and refusal, or if you choose to modify the template, you can add multiple signature lines and dates to indicate multiple attempts. For unimmunized or under-immunized children, you may want to flag their chart to be reminded to revisit the immunization discussion, as well as to alert the pediatrician or other health care provider about missed immunizations when considering the evaluation of acute illness in the future, especially for young children with fevers.

*\*The Refusal of Recommended Immunization [form](#) and [template](#) provided by the AAP are not intended as a substitute for legal advice from a qualified attorney. There are many different state laws and factual circumstances so practices may want to consider obtaining advice from a qualified attorney.*

The AAP Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine and the Section on Administration and Practice Management, and other contributing sections and committees, hope this form will be helpful as you encounter parents who refuse immunizations. It is available on the AAP Web site under [Patient Care and Immunizations](#).

Sincerely,

/s/

Jesse Hackell, MD, FAAP

Chairperson, AAP Committee on Practice and Ambulatory  
Medicine

/s/

Beth Gallant, MD, FAAP

Chairperson, AAP Section on Administration  
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