Survey: Support of school COVID-19 vaccine mandates growing, resistance to vaccinating children shrinking

by Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor


About 61% of adults support schools requiring COVID-19 vaccines, a figure that has been growing, according to a new national survey.

Researchers also found parents are becoming less resistant to vaccinating their children, although resistance among mothers of young children has not budged.

The data come from the COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States, a joint project of Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University and Northwestern University.

The group conducted a nationwide survey on COVID-19 vaccine resistance in three waves this year, most recently from June 9 to July 6. The summer wave included nearly 21,000 adults, just over 7,000 of whom lived with children.

School vaccine mandates

Support for a school vaccine mandate has grown from 54% in the winter to 61% this summer and is slightly higher among adults who are not parents.

Researchers found large gaps based on political party. About 81% of Democrats and 41% of Republicans support a school vaccine mandate. Mothers of young children are less likely to support a mandate than mothers or father of older children.

Support is higher in urban areas than suburban or rural areas and among people with more education and
higher incomes. Among racial groups, Asian Americans are most likely to support a mandate, while White adults are least likely to support one.

The AAP's updated guidance for schools released this week encourages in-person learning this fall and urges everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Schools should use layers of protection that include masks for everyone 2 years and older.

**Vaccine resistance**

Overall, the percentage of parents resistant to vaccinating their children has declined throughout the year, according to the survey. Resistance is defined as those extremely unlikely to vaccinate.

Looking at age and gender, the survey found the most resistance among young mothers and mothers of young children. About 30% of mothers of children under age 6 are resistant compared to about 21% of mothers of teenagers and about 5% of fathers of teenagers.

As with school mandates, there are large gaps in resistance based on political party. About 7% of Democrats and 31% of Republicans are resistant to vaccinating their children.

Resistance was similar among Black, Hispanic and White parents this summer. Among Black parents, it dropped from 24% in the winter to 19% this summer.

Parents without a bachelor's degree are more likely to be resistant to vaccinating their children than those with a degree. Similarly, those with a lower income are more likely to be resistant than those with a higher income.

Children accounted for 16% of new cases last week, according to data from the AAP and Children's Hospital Association. In total, more than 4.08 million children have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic and 346 have died.

A new AAP report shows about 46% of children ages 16 and 17 have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine along with about 34% of 12- to 15-year-olds. About 38% and 25% of each group, respectively, have been fully vaccinated.

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy, M.D., M.B.A., released an advisory last week on the danger of health misinformation, saying it "has sowed confusion, reduced trust in public health measures, and hindered efforts to get Americans vaccinated." He called for a "whole-of-society effort" to combat it.

**Resources**

- Information from the CDC on clinical considerations for COVID-19 vaccines
- CDC COVID vaccination toolkit for pediatricians
- AAP guidance on providing COVID-19 vaccines to adolescents
- Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on preparing children and adolescents for COVID-19 vaccination