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California Providers of Pediatric Services,

We urge all providers of pediatric services to remain vigilant in making a strong recommendation for COVID-19 and influenza vaccination to protect children and those around them – especially now as families gather for the holidays.

Recent [authorizations of bivalent COVID-19 vaccines for children 5 years and up](#) will help protect your patients from the ever-evolving SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. While most cases among children are mild, COVID-19 can be serious—attributed to over [122,000 hospitalizations and 1500 deaths among children in the US](#).

Fall and winter well-child checks, acute care visits and walk-in hours are good opportunities to immunize patients against COVID-19 and influenza, which can help prevent disease spread during this time when we are seeing a surge in respiratory infections.

Vaccination rates among California children remain very low. Approximately 58% of children 5-17 years of age and only about [10% of children in California younger than 5 years of age](#) have received their first doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

Influenza vaccination of children and adolescents also remain extremely low. Vaccination coverage for all children as of week ending November 5, 2022, is only around 31% in California.

Parents and caregivers trust you as their child's healthcare practitioner, to provide the best guidance and care for their children. In conversations and messages with parents and caregivers, your recommendation of COVID-19 and influenza vaccine as the best protection against severe disease is a powerful tool to promote child health.

Strategies to Consider:

1. If you haven't already, consider [enrolling in the California COVID-19 Vaccination Program](#), to begin administering COVID-19 vaccine in your clinic.
2. Promote COVID-19 vaccine availability to your patients via patient portals or other communications; some families may still be unaware children under 5 years of age are eligible to get vaccinated.
3. Reach out to schedule in-person appointments using a [Robocall Script](#) or [Letter](#).
4. Implement EHR prompts to remind clinic staff when patients are due for COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.
5. Administer COVID-19 vaccines at all visits, including well-child checks and while patients get vaccinated against flu.
6. Use the [immunization registry](#) and/or your EHR to identify those due for COVID-19 vaccination.
7. Schedule 2nd doses and boosters before families leave the clinic.
8. Plan immunization catch-up clinics at convenient times for working parents, including weekends and evenings.
9. Personal accounts are persuasive and memorable; share the reasons why you believe vaccinating against COVID-19 is still important.
10. Consider modifying your clinic's post COVID-19 vaccination observational time, as the 15-minute observational period is now optional. See CDC clinical considerations for more details.

Additional Resources:

- [Resources to Promote the COVID-19 Vaccine for Children & Teens](#) (CDC)
- [Talking with Parents about COVID-19 Vaccines for Children Webinar](#)
- [Don't Wait – Vaccinate Toolkit](#)
- [California COVID-19 Vaccination Program](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Timing Schedule](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Product Guide](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Best Practice Checklist](#)



Thank you for keeping California kids healthy this holiday season and beyond.

Sincerely,

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