

Study reveals reluctance among New York City parents to vaccinate young children for COVID-19

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Almost 40% of New York City parents are hesitant to vaccinate their

young children for COVID-19, according to a new study by researchers at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy (CUNY SPH).

For the study, which was published Thursday in the *American Journal of Public Health*, Assistant Professor Chloe Teasdale and colleagues surveyed 2,506 New Yorkers with [kids](#) ages 5 to 11 years, two weeks after the FDA granted emergency use authorization of COVID-19 vaccines for [school-aged children](#). In the [representative survey](#), 12% reported that their child was already vaccinated and 51% reported being very or somewhat likely to get their child vaccinated. The survey also showed that 8% of parents were not sure and 29% of parents reported they were not very likely or not at all likely to vaccinate their child.

The findings are consistent with a March 2021 survey, also conducted by CUNY SPH researchers, and suggest that many New York City parents may not vaccinate their children for COVID-19. Also consistent with previous studies, 89% of [vaccine](#)-hesitant parents (those saying they were unsure, not very likely, or not at all likely to vaccinate their child) cited safety concerns as the reason for their hesitancy and 78% reported concerns about the effectiveness of the COVID vaccines.

This is concerning, says Teasdale, but the findings also yield information that can inform efforts to increase vaccine acceptability. One key result is that more than half of vaccine-hesitant parents do not believe children need COVID-19 vaccination, suggesting that greater awareness is needed about the risk of COVID-19 infection in children and their role in spreading the virus. The study also found that vaccine-hesitant parents were less likely to be vaccinated themselves, more likely to have not voted or to have voted for the Republican candidate in the 2021 NYC mayoral election, and to be from Staten Island. A novel finding is that children of vaccine-hesitant parents were not less likely to have received routine vaccination (required for school-attendance) but were more

likely to have not received flu vaccination. These findings suggest that mandates may be key for increasing COVID-19 vaccine coverage in children.

Enhanced efforts to increase parental awareness about the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccination are needed in order to foster vaccine confidence, acceptance, and uptake, the authors say.

"It's been six months since the CDC recommended use of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for 5- to 11-year-olds but currently only 40% of kids have been fully vaccinated in NYC," says Teasdale. "We need to do a lot more to get all school-aged kids vaccinated in order to protect them from infection and prevent severe disease. We hope that our findings will contribute to those efforts."

More information: Chloe A. Teasdale et al, COVID-19 Vaccine Coverage and Hesitancy Among New York City Parents of Children Aged 5–11 Years, *American Journal of Public Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2022.306784](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2022.306784)

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