

Parents cite news and government as top sources for child vaccine info

May 19 2022, by Stephanie Kulke



Credit: Alexander Dummer on Unsplash

Following the back-and-forth progress of pandemic infection rates and vaccine and masking recommendations has been challenging, especially for parents of school age children, many of whom remain hesitant about

vaccinating their children.

A [national poll](#) seeking to understand where [parents](#) get information about vaccinating their [children](#) against COVID-19 found parents of vaccinated children and parents of unvaccinated children divided over the best sources of information. The poll was conducted by the COVID States Project, a consortium of universities comprised of Northwestern, Harvard, Northeastern and Rutgers. The survey used both list selection and open-ended questions to compare responses.

When given a list of possible information sources consulted for [child health](#) or [vaccine information](#), parents most commonly selected news and the government, followed by television, Facebook and YouTube.

When given an open-ended response question about where they got information to decide whether to vaccinate their kids against COVID-19, health care professionals were the most commonly cited source of information overall, followed by news, government and online/social media sources.

The widest gap in sources of information were between parents of vaccinated and unvaccinated children, with parents of vaccinated children relying more on health care professionals than the latter.

"The results show the crucial role of health care professionals in passing along consensus scientific information," said political scientist James Druckman, one of the consortium researchers. "The challenge is how to ensure more parents gain access to such advice, particularly if they are not apt to see it on their own."

Druckman is the Payson S. Wild Professor of Political Science in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and associate director of the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern.

Other key findings

- Parents of vaccinated children ages five to 18 were much more likely to mention [health care professionals](#)—as well as the government and schools—compared to those with unvaccinated children ages five to 18.
- Conversely, parents of unvaccinated kids ages five to 18 were much more likely to say their own general research, and their own decisions and values, were important sources in decision-making compared to parents of vaccinated kids ages five to 18.
- Parents of [unvaccinated children](#) ages five to 18 were also more likely to say that they did not know where they got information, or they did not look for or receive information.
- Selecting from the list of options, parents indicated that they most commonly discussed vaccination decisions with their own parents, in-laws and other relatives.

The poll surveyed 22,234 individuals across all 50 states between March 4 and April 4. Participants were sampled using state-level representative quotas. Data was then weighted by demographics to match the U.S. population, including race/ethnicity, gender, age, income, education and rural/urban/suburban.

Provided by Northwestern University

Citation: Parents cite news and government as top sources for child vaccine info (2022, May 19) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-05-parents-cite-news-sources-child.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.