

CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS: CURRENT CONTEXT AND INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES

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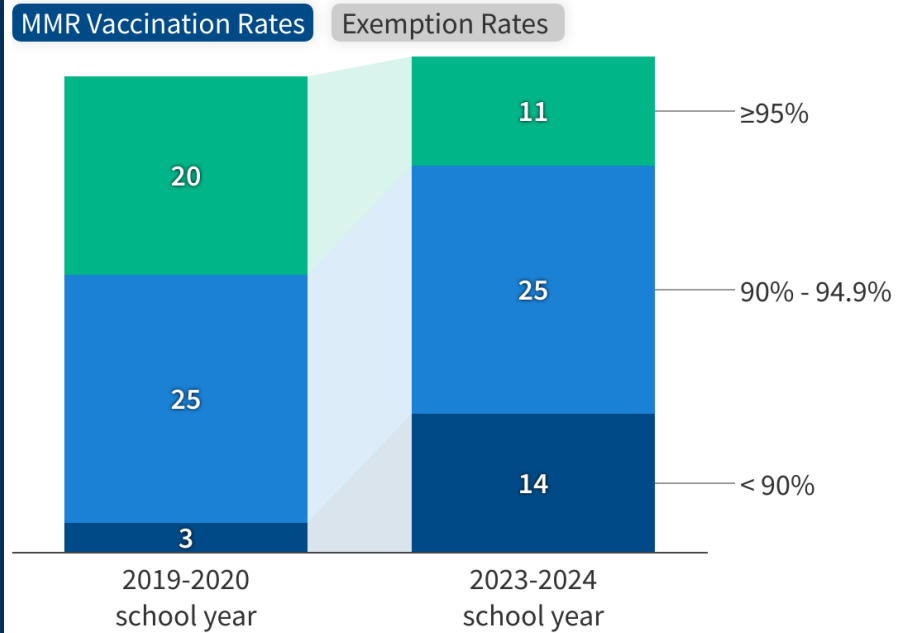
The precariousness of childhood vaccination

- Zhou et al. 2024:
 - Between 1994 and 2023 routine childhood vaccination prevented 508 million cases of illness, 32 million hospitalizations, and over 1 million deaths resulting in direct savings of \$540 billion and societal savings of \$2.7 trillion
- Ongoing attention is needed to sustain the benefits of vaccination
- Rates of childhood vaccination are decreasing in the U.S.

Figure 1

States Have Experienced Declines in Vaccination Rates and Increases in Exemption Rates Since the Pandemic Began

Number of states with MMR vaccination rates in select groups by school year



Note: MMR = measles, mumps, and rubella. The Healthy People 2030 Target for MMR is 95%. 48 states reported MMR vaccination rates for the 2019-2020 school year (AK, DC, DE did not report). 50 states (including DC) reported MMR vaccination rates for the 2023-2024 school year (MT did not report).

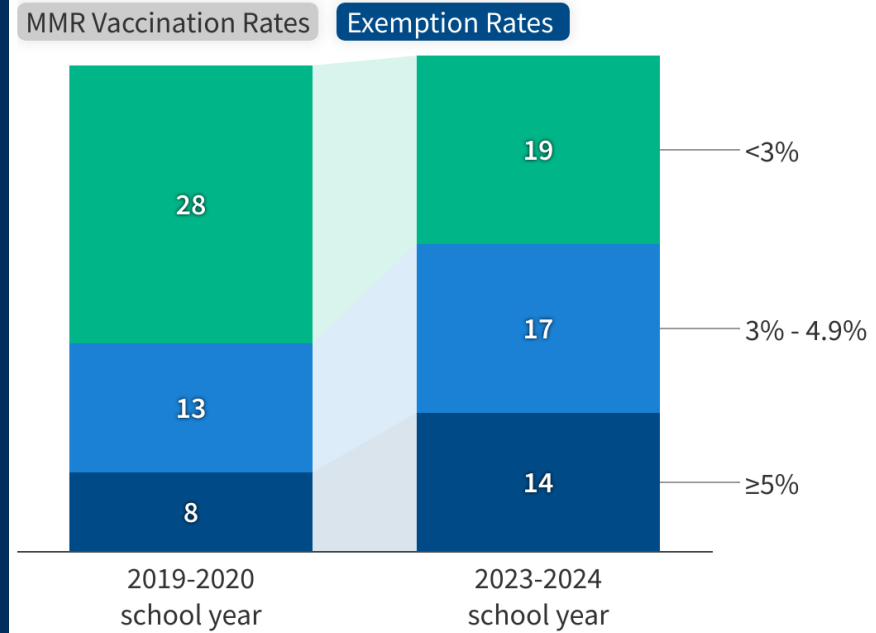
Source: Vaccination Coverage and Exemptions among Kindergartners, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S.)



Figure 1

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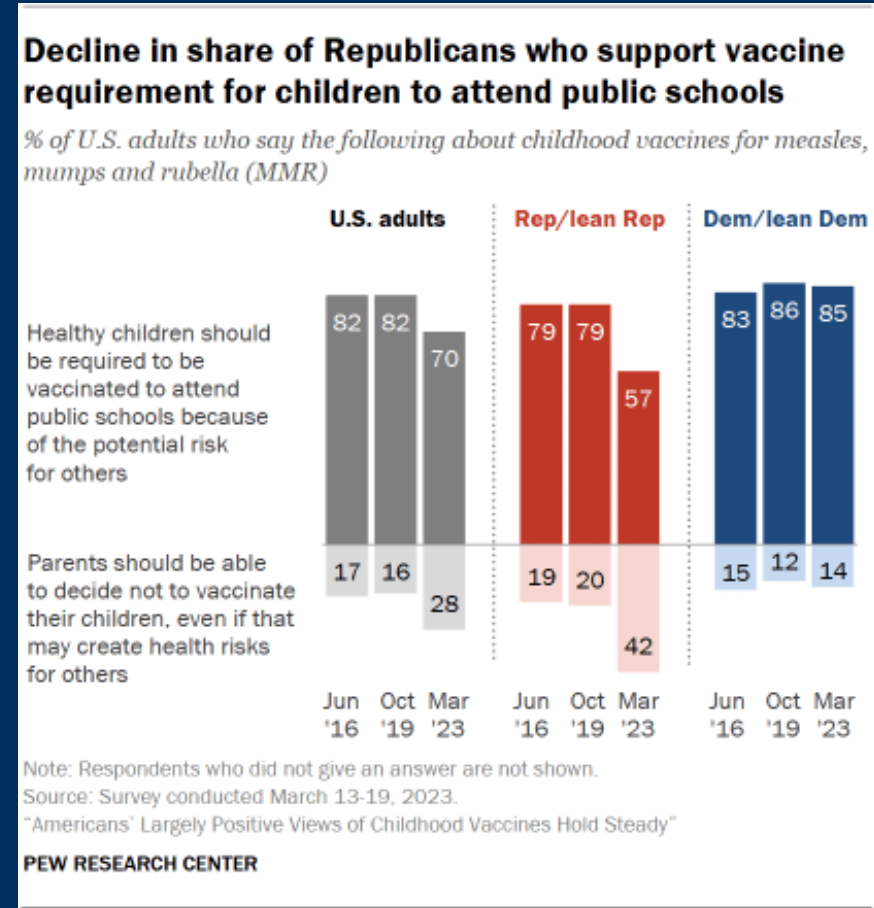
Number of states with exemption rates in select groups by school year



Note: MMR = measles, mumps, and rubella. The Healthy People 2030 Target for MMR is 95%. Exemption rates larger than 5% mean the state cannot reach the target, even if all non-exempt children receive their vaccinations. However, exemption rates shown here are for exemptions to one or more vaccines, so potentially achievable coverage rates could vary by vaccine type. 49 states reported exemption rates for the 2019-2020 school year (DC and DE did not report). 50 states (including DC) reported exemption rates for the 2023-2024 school year (MT did not report).

The impact of COVID-19

- Exacerbated access issues
- Heightened public attention to vaccines
- Partisan views of vaccination



Trust is key

- Trust in vaccines
- Trust in providers and/or healthcare professionals
- Trust in policy makers including the healthcare system, public health, government and those involved in approving and recommending vaccines

Individual-level strategies

1. Core messages about childhood vaccinations

- Clear, empathetic, evidence-based communication
- Narrative content including testimonials

“I long regretted bitterly and still regret that I had not given it [smallpox] by inoculation. This I mention for the sake of parents who omit that operation, on the supposition that they should never forgive themselves if a child died under it; my example showing that the regret may be the same either way, and that, therefore, the safer should be chosen.” Benjamin Franklin

Examples

- Vaccines are safe and effective.
- Vaccination protects your child from serious diseases and has saved millions of lives.
- Vaccines protect the community.
- Vaccination is something other people routinely do (vaccination is a social norm).

Individual-level strategies, cont.

2. Tailored communication

- Considering cultural, religious, and racial dynamics, particularly in communities with historical mistrust of the healthcare system
- Specific attitudinal and experiential backgrounds of parents
- MomsTalkShots app
- Health care providers are in positions to help parents reevaluate decisions, especially when circumstances change

Individual-level strategies, cont.

3. Parental reminders

- Research shows that reminders and recall systems can improve vaccination uptake
 - Especially impactful when reminders are expected and when they coincide with other appointments (such as routine check-ups)
- Reminders can be sent through different media including postcards, letters, text messaging and phone calls