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THE COVID STATES PROJECT: **A 50-STATE COVID-19 SURVEY** REPORT #71: CHILDHOOD COVID-19 VACCINE UPTAKE AND INTENTIONS

USA, November 2021

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The COVID States Project

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

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Northeastern University
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COVER MEMO

Summary Memo — December 13, 2021

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From April 2020 through September 2021, we conducted multiple waves of a large, 50-state survey, some results of which are presented here. You can find previous reports online at covidstates.org.

Note on methods:

Between November 3 and December 2, 2021, we surveyed 22,277 individuals across all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. The survey was conducted by PureSpectrum via an online, nonprobability sample, with state-level representative quotas for race/ethnicity, age, and gender (for methodological details on the other waves, see covidstates.org). In addition to balancing on these dimensions, we reweighted our data using demographic characteristics to match the U.S. population with respect to race/ethnicity, age, gender, education, and living in urban, suburban, or rural areas. This was the latest in a series of surveys we have been conducting since April 2020, examining attitudes and behaviors regarding COVID-19 in the United States.

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Childhood COVID-19 vaccine uptake and intentions

In early November 2021, children ages 5-11 were authorized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, making an [additional 28 million children](#) eligible for the shot. Given this significant advancement in COVID-19 vaccine availability - particularly in light of recent concerns over the Omicron variant - in this report we examine parent-reported COVID-19 vaccination intentions and uptake for children.

Below, we examine reported childhood vaccination rates by childhood age and across different parent demographic subgroups. Additionally, we report parents' expressed likelihood of vaccinating their children against COVID-19 across five survey waves from February, April, June, September, and November 2021.

Key Takeaways

- Parent-reported COVID-19 vaccination rates of youth **ages 12 to 18** have plateaued between September and November 2021, with 55% reporting that their children receiving at least one COVID-19 vaccine as of November, compared to 54% in September. While such vaccines only recently became available for younger children, 27% of parents with kids **ages 5 to 11** have reported their children receiving at least one dose.
- Despite the surge of children vaccinated since June, the proportion of vaccine-enthusiastic parents (parents who have either had their children vaccinated, or say they are likely to do so) has dropped since June, 2021, from 64% to 57%.
- College-educated, urban, Democratic, Asian, and older parents are more likely than average to report that their child has already been vaccinated. Rural, Republican, Independent, non-college educated, and younger parents are less likely.
- College-educated, Democratic, and Asian parents, as well as fathers, on average report a higher likelihood of vaccinating their children against COVID-19. Vaccination likelihood is lowest among Republican parents and younger mothers.

Part I: Parent-reported COVID-19 vaccination for children

Children Ages 5-11

Parent-Reported COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake for Children Ages 5 to 11

Percent of parents saying that at least one of their children ages 5-11 has received at least one dose of the COVID-19 Vaccine.

Parent Respondents Only, Weighted. Wave 20 time period: 11/03/2021-12/3/2021; N = 3230.

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Figure 1: Parent-Reported COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake for Children Ages 5 to 11.

The Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 became [publicly available](#) on November 2, 2021. Our November survey wave found that a quarter of parents of kids ages 5 to 11 reported that at least one of their children received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose by the time their parent took the survey (Figure 1). **Black parents were the least likely to report their child in this age group getting vaccinated**, compared to Hispanic, Asian, and White parents.¹

Democrats and college-educated parents of 5- to 11-year-olds were much more likely than their counterparts in other partisan groups or without a college education to report their child receiving the COVID-19 vaccine (36% and 41%, respectively). There is a modest difference in reported vaccination rates by parent age, with parents over 35 more likely to report vaccination than those 35-and-under (29% versus 24%).

Finally, a **15-point urban-rural gap exists for parent-reported COVID-19 vaccination for kids ages 5 to 11** (32% of urban parents versus 17% of rural parents).

Children Ages 12-18

Older children have had access to the vaccine for far longer than their younger siblings. The Pfizer vaccine has been authorized for 16-18-year-olds since its original release a year ago, while adolescents ages 12-15 [gained access starting](#) May 12, 2021. Combining these two age groups, we find that as of November 2021, 55% of parents of 12-18-year-olds said either all or some of their adolescents have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose. This has plateaued since September 2021 (54%).

Comparatively high numbers of Asian (72%) and Hispanic (62%) parents of kids ages 12 to 18 reported their child getting the vaccine. **White (51%) parents have the lowest proportion of parents of any racial group to say that their adolescent kids had been vaccinated.**

Fewer Republican (46%) and Independent (46%) parents were likely to report vaccinating their kids against COVID-19, relative to Democratic parents (66%). Higher proportions of college-educated parents (65%) and older parents (58%) reported that their kids had gotten the COVID-19 vaccine.

Once again, **rural areas lag behind urban and suburban areas in terms of vaccination rates for this age group.** Less than half of parents with kids ages 12 to 18 in rural areas (45%) report their child getting vaccinated, versus three-fifths of parents in urban areas.

¹ Hispanic, Asian, and White percentages are not statistically distinct from one another.

Parent-Reported COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake for Children Ages 12 to 18

Percent of parents saying that "all" or "some" of their children ages 12-18 have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 Vaccine.

Parent Respondents Only, Weighted. Wave 20 time period: 11/03/2021-12/3/2021; N = 2724.
Wave 19 time period: 08/26/2021-09/27/2021; N = 2222.

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Figure 2: Parent-Reported COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake for Children Ages 12 to 18.

Part II: Parent-reported likelihood of vaccinating their kids against COVID-19

Next, we examine parents' reported enthusiasm for vaccinating their children over five survey waves, fielded in February, April, June, September, and November 2021. The **percent of all parents who said they were likely to vaccinate (or had already vaccinated) their kids against COVID-19 increased steadily** from February (54%) to June (64%), and declined since, in September (59%) and November (57%) (Figure 3).

Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19, By Parent Race and Education

Percent of parents saying that it is "extremely" or "somewhat" likely they would vaccinate their kids against COVID-19, OR who said they have already vaccinated their child.

Parent Respondents Only, Weighted. Wave 16 time period: 02/05/2021-03/01/2021; N = 6216. Wave 17 time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021; N = 7074. Wave 18 time period: 06/09/2021-07/07/2021; N = 7038. Wave 19 time period: 08/26/2021-09/27/2021; N = 4412. Wave 20 time period: 11/03/2021-12/3/2021; N = 5540.

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Figure 3: Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19 Over Time, OR who Vaccinated Their Children, by Parent Race and Education.

Strikingly, this general trend over time is echoed across a majority of the parental demographic groups examined (Figures 3 through 6). **However, some demographic groups bucked this trend.** The proportions of Hispanic and Asian parents saying they were likely to (or already had) vaccinated their children have increased or plateaued over time (Figure 3). The same is true of older mothers - until the November drop in enthusiasm of 5 percentage points (Figure 4) - as well as parents of youth ages 12 to 18 (70% in June 2021, 71% in September 2021, and 69% in November 2021; see Table 1 in the appendix for details).

Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19, By Parent Age and Gender

Percent of parents saying that it is "extremely" or "somewhat" likely they would vaccinate their kids against COVID-19, OR who said they have already vaccinated their child.

Parent Respondents Only, Weighted. Wave 16 time period: 02/05/2021-03/01/2021; N = 6216. Wave 17 time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021; N = 7074. Wave 18 time period: 06/09/2021-07/07/2021; N = 7038. Wave 19 time period: 08/26/2021-09/27/2021; N = 4412. Wave 20 time period: 11/03/2021-12/3/2021; N = 5540.

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Figure 4: Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19 Over Time, by Parent Age and Gender.

Further, stable differences in child vaccination intentions among parental demographic groups emerge. More than 60% of college educated, Asian, Hispanic, older, and Democratic parents, as well as older fathers, have consistently, over time, indicated that they were likely to vaccinate their children. Among these groups, **college-educated parents have consistently been the most vaccine enthusiastic** in vaccinating their kids, with close to or above 80% saying they were likely to vaccinate their children for all waves examined.

Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19, By Parent Political Party and Location

Percent of parents saying that it is "extremely" or "somewhat" likely they would vaccinate their kids against COVID-19, OR who said they have already vaccinated their child.

Parent Respondents Only, Weighted. Wave 16 time period: 02/05/2021-03/01/2021; N = 6216. Wave 17 time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021; N = 7074. Wave 18 time period: 06/09/2021-07/07/2021; N = 7038. Wave 19 time period: 08/26/2021-09/27/2021; N = 4412. Wave 20 time period: 11/03/2021-12/3/2021; N = 5540.

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Figure 5: Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19 Over Time, OR who Vaccinated Their Children, by Parent Party and Location.

Conversely, less than 50% of Republican parents (Figure 5) and young mothers (Figure 4) in all waves said that they had or intended to have their children vaccinated against COVID-19. **Black parents were the racial/ethnic group with the lowest level of vaccine enthusiasm, dropping from 59% in June to 50% in November.** Rural areas have also consistently reported lower vaccination likelihood, only exceeding 50% in June 2021. Finally, vaccination likelihood differs by child age group, with parents of older children slightly more likely to express vaccine intention (70% in June 2021, 71% in September 2021, and 69% in November 2021) than parents of children ages 5 to 11 (68% in June 2021 to 64% in November 2021). Please see Table 1 in the appendix for details.

Appendix: Additional Figures and Tables

Kids Ages	21-Feb	21-Apr	21-Jun	21-Sep	21-Nov
Overall	54.4	60.81	63.85	58.8	57.26
Kids Aged 5-11			68.16		63.73
Kids Aged 0-11			66.24	56.9	
Kids Aged 12-18			69.89	71.37	69.16

Table 1: Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19, OR who Vaccinated Their Children, by Child Age Over Time.

Region	21-Feb	21-Apr	21-Jun	21-Sep	21-Nov
Northeast	58.79	68.56	70.72	68.21	63.09
South	48.95	56.94	60.97	56.75	52.04
Midwest	54.19	59.62	62.52	56.64	56.24
West	56.33	60.86	63.44	57.52	59.61

Table 2: Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19, OR who Vaccinated Their Children, by Region over time.

Childhood COVID-19 Vaccination Intention for Parents of Kids Ages 5-11, by Parent Race, Party, and Education (November 2021)

Responses of parents who answered the question, "When the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available for children ages 5 to 11, what would you do?", November 2021 data only.

Parent Respondents Only, Weighted. Wave 20 time period: 11/03/2021-12/3/2021; N = 3235.

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Figure 6: Childhood COVID-19 Vaccination Intention for Parents of Kids Ages 5-11, By Parent Race, Party, and Education.

Childhood COVID-19 Vaccination Intention for Parents of Kids Ages 5-11 (November 2021)

Responses of parents who answered the question, "When the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available for children ages 5 to 11, what would you do?", November 2021 data only.

Parent Respondents Only, Weighted. Wave 20 time period: 11/03/2021-12/3/2021; N = 3235.

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Figure 7: Childhood COVID-19 Vaccination Intention for Parents of Kids Ages 5-11, By Parent Age, Location, and Gender.

Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19 by Region (November 2021)

Percent of parents saying that it is "extremely" or "somewhat" likely that they would vaccinate their kids against COVID-19, OR who said they have already vaccinated their child.

Percent of Parents Likely to Vaccinate Child

Parent Respondents Only, Weighted. Wave 20 time period: 11/03/2021-12/3/2021; N = 5540.

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Figure 8: Parent-Reported Likelihood of Vaccinating Children Against COVID-19, OR who Vaccinated Their Children, by Region for November 2021 data.