

Tips for Pediatric Providers

Use this guide to help support your patients in having productive conversations with their parents or guardians about the benefits of vaccination.



- ✔ Consider your patient’s [Piaget’s Cognitive Developmental Stages](#) on patient counseling when communicating with them about their medical care and vaccinations

Approximate Age (yrs)	Developmental Stage	General Considerations	Counseling Example
0–2	Sensory Motor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not able to process medication information given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No counseling recommended
2–7	Preoperational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot comprehend cause and effect or implications of the future • Unable to understand how their actions can affect their health • Visual displays are effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This medicine will make you feel better. • Your mom or dad will give it to you when you wake up and before you go to sleep. • It tastes pretty good and I think you will like it. • Do you have any questions for me?
7–11	Concrete Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to be able to understand diseases and different aspects of a situation • Better understand concrete examples than hypothetical situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This medicine will help get rid of the pain and infection in your ear • You will take it when you get up in the morning and before you go to bed. • It’s important to take it every day for 10 days so your infection doesn’t come back. • Do you have any questions for me?
≥12	Formal Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand illness, how it occurs and how they can control it • Capable of logical reasoning • Typically able to receive a message at the same level as an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This amoxicillin will decrease the bacteria in your ear to get rid of your ear infection. • You will take it twice a day, in the morning and evening for 10 days. • Your should start feeling better in 2 days, but it is important to keep taking it even if you start feeling better so the infection doesn’t come back. • Be sure to talk to your parents if you still feel bad after 2 days or if you get a rash. • You can take amoxicillin with food to help decrease upset stomach. • What questions do you have for me?

Source: [Communication Strategies for Empowering and Protecting Children.](#)

- ✔ Answer the patient’s questions about vaccines.
 - Inform them of the expected [immunization schedule](#) and [required vaccinations](#) and why these are mapped out (to protect them when they are most vulnerable or before they are exposed to vaccine preventable diseases.)
 - Review the CDC’s [Parents’ Commonly Asked Questions about Vaccines](#) to help prepare the patient for conversations with their parent or guardian.

- ✔ Encourage teens to:
 - Listen to their parents’ perspective
 - Share their own personal perspective/feelings
 - Give their parents the facts about vaccines

- ✔ Share ICAAP handout and/or family resources webpage with them.

- ✔ Know the [situations in which a minor may be able to consent to care](#): Patients under 18 typically cannot consent to medical care or vaccination without a parent/guardian’s approval. Exceptions to this include:
 - A minor who is 12 or older who may have come into contact with any STI may give consent to the furnishing of medical care or counseling related to the diagnosis or treatment of, or vaccination against, an STI (HPV or Hepatitis B vaccine)
 - Minors who are married, pregnant, or a parent
 - Patient is an unaccompanied minor seeking care. This is a person at least 14 years of age but less than 18 years of age who is living separate and apart from his or her parents or legal guardian, whether with or without the consent of a parent or legal guardian who is unable or unwilling to return to the residence of a parent and managing his or her own personal affairs. “Minor seeking care” does not include minors who are under the protective custody, temporary custody, or guardianship of the Department of Children and Family Services. Learn more about minors seeking care in the [Consent by Minors to Health Care Services Act](#).