

Biden Urges COVID Vaccination for America's Youngest Kids

— "This is no time for politics," president warns after jabs authorized for infants and toddlers

by [Shannon Firth](#), Washington Correspondent, MedPage Today

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President Biden on Tuesday urged parents to schedule COVID-19 vaccinations for their little kids.

"The United States is now the first country in the world to offer safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines for children as young as 6 months old," he said at a press briefing.

"[For] the first time in our fight against this pandemic, nearly every American can now have access to life-saving vaccines," he added. "This is a very historic milestone -- a monumental step forward."

Biden noted that the administration has secured "enough doses" and is launching a comprehensive vaccination campaign involving states, local health departments, pediatricians, family physicians, pharmacies, community health centers, and other "trusted messengers" to help "get [COVID] shots in arms." He added that stores such as Walgreens, CVS, and Walmart are scheduling appointments for later this week, "and starting today, you can go to [vaccines.gov](#) and find information and appointments near you."

Vaccines also will soon be available for children under age 5 years in pediatricians' offices and at children's hospitals. "More and more locations will be ramping up and more vaccines are [being] delivered to providers in your areas every day," Biden said.

The president stressed that COVID vaccines are "safe and effective," and that the authorization of the vaccines occurred only after "extensive scientific review" by the FDA and the CDC. He encouraged parents with lingering questions to talk to their doctors.

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted unanimously, 12-0, [to recommend that children ages 6 months and older receive COVID-19 vaccines](#) on Saturday, following FDA's emergency use authorization on Friday of Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna's mRNA vaccines for this young demographic.

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH, endorsed ACIP's recommendation that Moderna's two-dose series be given to children ages 6 months to 5 years, and that Pfizer's three-dose series be given to children ages 6 months to 4 years.

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ACIP members at the Saturday meeting stressed the importance of the CDC doing everything in its power to encourage parents to vaccinate young children, after agency staff shared data suggesting that about a third of parents "definitely or probably" would not let children in this age group get vaccinated against COVID. Other parents reported that they would not vaccinate their youngest children immediately after eligibility. Only one in five parents reported being prepared to vaccinate their young children within 3 months of vaccine accessibility.

COVID is still the fourth or fifth leading cause of death among children in this age group, according to [epidemiological data](#), and more children died from COVID than have died from other vaccine-preventable diseases such as varicella, rubella, and rotavirus in the years before vaccines were available for those illnesses.

At the press briefing, Biden urged elected officials not to "get in the way and make it more difficult for parents who want their children to be vaccinated, who want to protect them and those around them. This is no time for politics. It's about parents being able to do

everything they can to keep their children safe." Last week, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) spoke out against COVID-19 vaccines for young children, and said the [state will not provide programs](#) to administer vaccines for toddlers or infants.

Asked how many children will need to be vaccinated before the federal government will need more funding from Congress, Biden said: "We don't just need more money for vaccines for children; eventually, we need more money to plan for the second pandemic. There's going to be another pandemic. We have to think ahead."

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