



Spotlight: Pioneer Valley Pediatrics

Pioneer Valley Pediatrics (PVP), in Western Mass, is known for its strong commitment to evidence-based, pro-vaccination care. The practice actively promotes vaccine education through its [website](#), which features a dedicated Vaccination Information section, including the practice’s vaccine policy, vaccine FAQs, educational videos, and a link to the current American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) immunization schedule. MVCP recently sat down with PVP’s Ann Dalton, RN, Quality and Clinical Project Manager, to discuss their vaccination efforts:



Question



How important is it for your practice to maintain a clear vaccine policy for your patients and families?

Answer



Before registering patients with our practice, we ensure that parents are aware of the practice’s Vaccine Policy. Most parents are not familiar with the Recommended Childhood Vaccine Schedule. We encourage them to look at the schedule on our website so they can make an informed decision before joining the practice. This helps build trust and avoid future misunderstandings that are often distressing for parents.

Sharing our vaccine policy in a clear and understandable format beginning at the first parent encounter is an initial and critical step in building a trusting partnership between parents and their doctor. At the same time, they are given a printed FAQ handout based on questions often asked by our own parents. Parents can find additional vaccine information and video clips of [Dr. Paul Offit](#) responding to common questions on our website.

Question



You have also been recognized for your efforts to engage parents with vaccine hesitancy and caregivers. Can you share strategies PVP uses to build trust and address vaccine concerns?

Answer



Today’s parents, more than ever, receive much contradicting information related to vaccines from many sources. This can cause confusion and doubt about what they should believe and as a result we have seen a rise in vaccine hesitancy with our parents over the last two years. PVP aims to be the first source of vaccine education for our parents as it has been our experience that once a parent develops concerns about vaccine safety, for any reason, it is difficult for them to overcome this fear.

In practice if a parent declines a vaccine at their well child visit despite physician counseling, a dedicated staff member begins a follow up outreach process with the family. This consists of providing a safe space for parents to express concerns and ask questions. The goal is not to push parents into vaccinating but to provide access to information on our website that builds their confidence to make their own choice to vaccinate. Doctors continually provide vaccine counseling at each visit. The child’s vaccine catch up progress is monitored and followed up on when necessary. The majority of parents ultimately do choose to vaccinate according to the AAP’s Childhood Vaccination Schedule. PVP respects the decision of parents who choose not to vaccinate as well. For those who opt out, PVP allows parents 30 days to find a new provider for their child. Their children continue to receive care at PVP in the interim.