

Child Health Poll: Vast majority of Tennessee parents say their kids get regular immunizations, support school-based immunization requirements

Roughly 8 in 10 parents surveyed across the state said they are concerned about communicable diseases like measles if others are not immunized and agreed that immunizations are important to protect their children from serious infections.

New analyses of polling of Tennessee parents show that 85% of parents say their kids had or would receive all recommended immunizations, and 8 in 10 agreed or strongly agreed that children should have a minimum set of immunizations to attend school.

The polling conducted by researchers at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt in fall 2025 also shows that most parents trust their child's doctor most when considering immunization decisions. More than 75% of parents listed their child's primary care provider among their top three most influential sources shaping their choices regarding immunizations, with school requirements (40%) and the state or local health department (35%) also among the most cited sources.

"Most parents clearly view immunizations as safe and important both for their own children and for the greater good. They also consistently highlight their child's doctor as the best source of trustworthy information on this topic," said Derek Williams, MD, MPH, professor of Pediatrics at Monroe Carell.

Other sources often selected as influential sources by parents include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (30%), the American Academy of Pediatrics (29%), and close friends and family (29%).

In contrast, news and social media were ranked among the least influential (10% or less).

"Misleading and unscientific information regarding immunizations is increasingly prevalent across a variety of platforms. It seems most parents are filtering and discounting these sources, though we cannot ignore the misconceptions and hesitancy fueled by them," said Williams, who holds the Dr. William R. Long Directorship in Child Health Research.

Roughly 8 in 10 parents surveyed across the state said they are concerned about communicable diseases like measles if others are not immunized and agreed that immunizations are important to protect their children from serious infections.

About the same number of parents agreed that a minimum set of immunizations should be required to attend school.

"Routine childhood immunization is a critical public health strategy that has prevented over 1 million deaths in the U.S. over the last 30 years, nearly all among children under 5

years of age. Recent outbreaks of serious and preventable suffering from diseases like measles and pertussis highlight the very real consequences of immunization delays and refusals,” Williams said. “Parents are worried. They want to do the right thing for their child. They support the sentiment that routine immunizations are safe, effective and critically important. They also have concerns. Their child’s pediatrician is the right trusted source to address these concerns,” he added.

About the Vanderbilt Child Health Poll

The Vanderbilt Child Health Poll is conducted annually to gauge Tennessee parents’ concerns about a wide range of health-related topics. The data, collected from a representative sample of Tennessee parents across the state, focuses on issues related to child health and well-being, ranging from top health concerns to health care access and delivery, education, and food security. Roughly 80% of all parents polled identified as registered voters.