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Position Statement: Vaccinations September 2016

Immunizations have led to a significant decrease in rates of vaccine-preventable diseases. The current vaccine schedule is the only one recommended by the CDC and the AAP. No alternative schedules have been evaluated. Vaccines are tested thoroughly before licensure and vaccine safety assessment networks exist to monitor vaccine safety after licensure.

Research studies indicate vaccines are safe and effective and that serious disease can occur if children are not immunized. Control of many vaccine preventable diseases is dependent on a significant proportion of the population in a community being immune and children exempt from vaccination due to personal or religious reasons are not only at greater risk of developing vaccine preventable disease, but also put vaccinated and medically exempt children who live in the same area at risk.

Parent concerns range from hesitancy about some immunizations to refusal of all vaccines. Clinicians are encouraged to discuss vaccine matters with reluctant parents, keeping in mind that many, if not most, vaccine hesitant parents are not opposed to vaccinating their children, but are seeking guidance about the issues involved, including the complexity of the schedule and the number of vaccines proposed. Pediatricians and other health care providers play an important role in educating parents about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines.

The decision to dismiss a family who refuses immunization is not one that should be made lightly and should not be made without considering and respecting the reasons for the parents' point of view; however, the individual clinician may consider dismissal of families who refuse vaccination as an acceptable option.

Vaccination according to current CDC and AAP guidelines is recommended.

Adapted from the AAP Clinical Report on Vaccination
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/>