

The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

How many kids does it take to reach herd immunity?

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Text/Call/Email: [Michele Kayal](#), VP Media and Communications, 703-919-8778

Dear Friends,

This week's news had big implications for little kids.

COVID-12-to-15

Best item all week: Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine is **remarkably safe and effective** in children aged 12 to 15.

Why is that so great?: Experts say "herd immunity" can only be reached once 75%+ of the population is vaccinated. Children make up about a quarter of the population. So do the math: **Kids are the Holy Grail of herd immunity.**



Photo by [Cristiano Valadar](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Why else?:

- More than [3.5 million children](#) have tested positive for COVID-19 and nearly [300 have died](#).
- COVID-19 disproportionately affects children of color. The rate of COVID-19 hospitalization is [five times higher for Black children and eight times higher among Latino or Hispanic children](#) than it is among white kids, according to an August 2020 CDC study.
- Every aspect of children's lives has been affected by the pandemic, from school and child care closures to housing challenges, increased poverty,

[food insecurity](#), mental health issues, and missed wellness checks and vaccinations. Experiencing just one of these issues could inflict long-term negative impacts on a child's life.

So when will all kids be vaccinated — and back to school?: Well that's the problem, isn't it? Some experts believe [vaccines could be available for children 12 to 16 by this summer](#) and for younger kids in early 2022. But as of this moment, there is ***no comprehensive, national plan for getting shots in little arms***. Will shots be distributed at school? Pediatricians' offices? Mobile units? Kids can't just take themselves to CVS.

Besides having a rollout plan, what else needs to be done?:

- Public awareness campaigns are needed to **overcome vaccine hesitancy** around the COVID-19 vaccine and even routine vaccines, which many children have missed during the pandemic lockdown.
- Particular attention must be paid to **communities of color**, which traditionally experience more vaccine hesitancy because of prior experiences with systemic racism in health care.
- The federal government and NIH should continue to **invest in its institutes** including the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, both of which are funding **PRISM, the Pediatric Research Immune Network on SARS-CoV-2 and MIS-C**, to understand some of the impacts COVID-19 has on children.
- Experts must **determine why** most of the covid deaths have been among children of color.

Trains, planes, automobiles — and schools

Featuring this item second, because we consider [President Biden's \\$2 trillion infrastructure plan](#) a down payment on a few of our children's vital needs. The greater investment — in children's health insurance, expanded child tax benefits, paid family and medical leave and other important policies aimed at improving the lives of our nation's children — is slated for the next big bill, expected out in a few weeks. The infrastructure plan calls for investment in:

- **Education:** \$100 billion to repair, modernize and build more public schools, narrowing the gap between well-off and low-income students, who disproportionately attend unsafe, unhealthy, technology-starved schools.
- **Broadband:** \$100 billion to expand broadband access to unserved and underserved areas to reach 100% high-speed coverage and to reduce the cost of access. No more images of [kids huddling outside Taco Bell](#) trying to get on the Internet to do their homework, a plight that overwhelmingly affects low-income and Black and brown children.
- **Child Care:** \$25 billion to upgrade run-down child care facilities and build new centers in high-need areas, which disproportionately affect low-income children and children of color.
- **Drinking water:** \$45 billion to replace every single one of the nation's lead pipes and service lines in our drinking water systems, which affect an estimated 10 million homes and disproportionately impact communities of color. This investment also aims to reduce lead exposure in 400,000 schools and childcare facilities.
- **Housing:** \$213 billion to build, preserve, and renovate more than two million affordable and sustainable places to live. The provision also would

eliminate zoning laws that *de facto* segregate low-income families and families of color.

- **Juvenile Justice:** \$5 billion to support evidenced-based community violence prevention and offer job training for formerly justice-involved youth.



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