

Childhood & Youth Committee

Childhood COVID-19 Vaccination and Parental Education Campaign

April 13, 2022

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HOUSTON HEALTH
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ELC Reopening Schools

The *ELC Reopening Schools* supplement supports COVID-19 screening testing and other mitigation activities in K–12 schools for teachers, staff, and students to reopen and keep schools open safely for in-person instruction.

HHD was awarded funding for:

- School testing and HEPPA filters
- Staffing support for schools
- **Public health education campaign**

Lopez Negrete Communications contracted to design and execute campaign

- Target audience is parents of school-age children
- Goal is to encourage participation in on-campus testing and vaccination of children

Objectives

To understand key barriers and motivations to getting eligible children vaccinated and encouraging participation in the schools on-campus testing programs.

Focus groups with parents of unvaccinated children ages 5-17

- 8 groups, 2-hour sessions, 4-6 participants per group, all City of Houston residents
- 2 groups per key ethnic segment: NW White, Hispanic, African American and API
- Hispanic groups conducted in both English & Spanish

In-depth-interviews (IDIs)with trusted voices”

- 6 one-hour IDIs with trusted voices within various communities in Houston
- Included school principals, nurses, social workers, healthcare workers
- Variety of communities and segments

Key Insights

- I'm Paying Attention
- Acknowledge My Concerns
- Encourage Me... Don't Shame Me
- Show Me Don't Tell Me
- There're Very Few People I Trust
- I'm Persuadable

I'm Paying Attention

- The decision of whether or not to vaccinate their kids is top of mind among most parents.
- Parents of children 5-17 are actively engaged and thinking about vaccination.
- Most participants see being vaccinated as a necessary risk they had to take personally. However, when it comes to their children, they see vaccination in a different light and are more risk averse.
- Parents keep themselves updated, especially keeping an eye on new variants and new information that might help them decide.



Acknowledge My Concerns

- The primary concern over child vaccination is the potential for long-term side effects.
- Many parents believe that because of the speed at which the vaccine was developed and the relatively short time it has been in the market, there may be some – yet unknown – long term side effects.
- A key need here is a recognition that the decision is not an easy one for these parents.

Key Insight:

Encourage Me... Don't Shame Me



Encourage Me... Don't Shame Me

- As parents agonize over whether to vaccinate their kids or not, they are very sensitive to all the pressure being put on them.
- They particularly resent messaging or pressure that is seen as trying to shame them, or messaging that is coercive in nature.
- Shaming and fear-inducing statements appear to make parents less open to hearing persuasive argument for vaccination.

Show Me Don't Tell Me

- Messages need to be presented as recommendations, not as absolute truths that they indicated lack reliability.
- They particularly would like to have data or results from a trusted source that doesn't feel like it has an agenda, or that is simply being copy/pasted uncritically.
- Parents want to try to understand the effectiveness of the vaccine vs. the side effects.
- A key opportunity here is a lack of appreciation of the value of the vaccine in reducing serious illness (vs preventing infections).

Key Insight:

There're Very Few People I Trust



There're Very Few People I Trust

- Across the board parents are very distrustful of what they hear about Covid.
- Parents tend to spend a lot of time with social media but do not trust most of what they find there.
- For the most parts, doctors, nurses and people in the medical field are seen as reliable sources of information, and the go-to people every time they have a COVID related question.
- They are also more open to local sources of information and media vs national networks.

Most Important Finding: I'm Persuadable

I'm Persuadable

- For parents who are themselves already vaccinated, most ARE considering vaccinating their kids
- Parents are “dragging their feet” - consciously or unconsciously - waiting to see if any adverse effects are found among children who have been vaccinated.
- As time goes by, parents feel more confidence in the vaccine’s safety
- When asked specifically how soon they might vaccinate their children (in the context that the vaccines were only recently approved for children 5-11) they all feel that it needs more time in the market.
- Roughly half stated it would take 6-12 months, while the other half said a year or longer.

Hispanic

- More prone to be influenced by WOM and to believe vaccines affect fertility.
- Least likely to reject media – especially local media.
- Some undocumented parents are fearful of vaccinating their kids

African American

- Most skeptical of government initiatives, including the push to get vaccinated.
- Many cited potential infertility for boys as a reason to fear getting their kids vaccinated

Asian

- More pragmatic and likelier to vaccinate their kids somewhat sooner than other groups.
- More likely to accept a school vaccine mandates.

Non-Hispanic White

- Most cautious of all parent groups, tended to be fairly well informed.
- They are the most skeptical of the media – prefer messages outlining facts or statistics

Utilizing the findings and insights from the research we are developing a creative campaign

- To be executed across paid, earned, owned and partnered media
- With the built-in the flexibility to be adapted by audience, in culture and in language

Developing and negotiating a media plan

- Will include digital and analog components
- English and Spanish TV, radio, print, billboards and digital
- African American, Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese, Hispanic assets for billboard and print
- In-language community-based media and organizations – from cultural centers to parent organizations

Campaign Development and Implementation



Build messaging kits and assets for influencers, trusted voices, community partners and Council Members

- PSAs, robocalls (scripts provided), email messaging

Place-based, community billboards and other neighborhood media

- Washaterias, bodegas, community centers, food trucks, etc.

Targeted community canvassing of 100,000 households with eligible children

- Apartment communities within elementary feeder patterns showing high rates of unvaccinated children
- Targeted with multilingual print materials
- Canvassers will be representative of the communities they are engaging

Thank you!



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Ongoing Measurement and Optimization

Measurement will be conducted on the following:

- Vaccination and testing: leveraging the existing reporting available from the Health Department
- Media effectiveness and efficiency: reach, frequency, impressions, value added received, mentions
- Engagement: either digital or analog, ranging from likes/shares to number of doors knocked