



# children's defense fund

Leave No Child Behind®

## Children's Defense Fund Encourages Families to Get Children Vaccinated, in Light of CDC Approval

Children's Defense Fund President and CEO Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson issued the following statement in response to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) recommendation](#) that the 28 million children in the US aged five to 11 be vaccinated with the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 pediatric vaccine:

"Approval of a COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11 is a major milestone in our country's response to a pandemic that has ravaged the nation for 19 months, with Black and brown communities disproportionately experiencing loss of life, livelihoods, and loved ones. I'm eager to recommend that parents get their children vaccinated with urgency. Children are far from immune, suffering both the indirect effects of community and family infection and also becoming infected, being hospitalized, and dying from the virus. A combination of the Delta variant and resistance to safety protocols in community spaces, like schools, caused [pediatric cases and mortality to skyrocket this summer](#), and Black and Hispanic children disproportionately lost their lives. Like so many parents across the country, I have lost sleep worrying about how I can keep my own children safe. While both of my teen sons have been fully vaccinated, I am pleased my two youngest children will soon join them.

"Vaccines are our country's best, proven defense against the scourge of COVID-19 and many other diseases. They are safe and effective at protecting children, their families, and communities. While approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric vaccine was fast-tracked, the trial and safety monitoring process was rigorous, and the [vaccine was shown](#) to overwhelmingly prevent children from getting COVID-19, with only mild side effects seen in clinical trials. As pediatric vaccines are made available for every child ages 5-11 over the next couple of weeks, I encourage parents to learn more and get their children vaccinated—to keep them safe and healthy and to begin to put the painful, anxious, disconnected, and lonely past year and a half truly behind us."

The Children's Defense Fund has [long advocated for](#) increased access to vaccines, especially among marginalized communities. As parents decide what is right for their families, we encourage them to talk to a trusted pediatrician, family physician, or other health care professional to get the facts. You can find a free vaccine near you at [www.vaccines.gov/](http://www.vaccines.gov/), by calling (800) 232-0233, or by texting your zip code to 438829.