TOP TIPS FOR PEDIATRICIANS

Using your voice in public and everyday conversations

As a pediatrician, your sphere of influence goes beyond the conversations you have in the exam room. Your voice can also be powerful in everyday conversations with people you know or meet. If you want to speak out on topics important to you and to children's health, these tips can help.



Framing a Conversation

Whether you're on social media, at the grocery store, or at your kid's soccer game, research has shown that these ways of framing the conversation resonate well, especially with vaccine-hesitant parents and caregivers. Using phrases like these can help create an easier transition to sometimes controversial topics.

	TRY THIS LANGUAGE
1 Anchor your comments in the relationships and conversations you have with your patients. People are more receptive when that relationship is framed as an exchange between partners. It helps when people know that you welcome questions and are happy to have important conversations.	*"These are the questions I get, and how I answer them."* *"The parents I see ask some of those same questions. This is what I say to them."*
2 Acknowledge parents' expertise. Skeptical parents and caregivers react better when their knowledge is recognized.	*"Parents know their children and what they need to thrive."* *"I know parents want what's best for their children."*
3 Frame your own expertise in terms of how it can help parents make decisions. Those who are skeptical and persuadable appreciate the training and expertise pediatricians have, especially when framed as a partnership.	*"My training in children's health has given me an understanding of how children grow, which illnesses are common, and how to keep kids from getting sick."* *"When parents have questions, it's my job to explain the science clearly and give information that's based on evidence."*
4 If the person shares something they have read or heard that is contrarian, acknowledge the flood of information out there before transitioning to one of the above approaches.	*"I know there is a lot of conflicting information out there. The parents I see ask some of those same questions. This is what I say to them."*
5 Avoid letting the conversation become political or partisan. Keeping the conversation focused on children's health can help avoid politics.	*"I know there are people on both sides who care about children. That's always been my focus: how to keep kids healthy."*

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Social Media

If you want to step out more into social media:

Reshare others' content

Reshare posts from Healthy Children or **these pediatrician influencers** who are working with AAP.

- This is a simple way to spread that content more broadly to your followers, without having to create content yourself.
- On Facebook or LinkedIn, reshare posts. If you want, add your own comments. This allows you to note your agreement in your own words.
- On Instagram, you can repost by tapping the two arrows, or click the larger arrow and "add to story."

Create your own content

Create your own posts using words or video. Video is more effective and can be easily captured on a smart phone.

- Keep it simple – 15 to 30 seconds is ideal.
- Use the tips above for framing what you say.
- Check out the American Academy of Pediatrics' talking points on various topics (right).
- If you get negative comments:
    1. If they are threatening or profane, go ahead and delete them.
    2. If they're simply disagreeable, it's better to keep them. Often, others will chime in and a good conversation can happen.
    3. If you decide to engage, do so respectfully and constructively. Share resources such as what's available on the **Healthy Children website**.
    4. Take a break. If the comments get to be too much, take a break from social media. There are lots of other ways to have an impact.

Extended Talking Points on Vaccines

AAP.org has a vaccine toolkit with extended talking points on topics such as the vaccine schedule, measles, vaccine ingredients, and other frequently asked questions.

More Resources From Your State Chapter

The Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics offers additional resources and up-to-date ways to talk about vaccines and other important topics.