



Ohio Chapter

INCORPORATED IN OHIO

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Public Attitudes and Beliefs About Childhood Vaccination in Ohio

About Ohio AAP

The Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Ohio AAP) promotes the health, safety and well-being of children and adolescents so they may reach their full potential. The Ohio AAP accomplishes this by addressing the needs of children, their families, and their communities, and by supporting Chapter members through advocacy, education, research, service, and improving the systems through which they deliver pediatric care.

Founded in the mid-1930s, Ohio AAP represents approximately 2,900 pediatricians, pediatric medical specialists, pediatric surgical specialists and physicians-in-training in Ohio. The Chapter serves the state of Ohio, including physicians and families in bordering communities who seek or receive care or practice in Ohio. In 2025, Ohio AAP members impacted more than one million children through quality improvement programs and education in Ohio and across the country.





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Executive Summary

Ohio voters broadly support childhood vaccination, but these views vary widely on the basis of partisanship and levels of trust regarding institutions.

BROAD SUPPORT FOR VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

A clear majority of Ohio registered voters (75%) believe children **should be required** to be vaccinated against preventable diseases, while 25% oppose such mandates.

Support extends to government action: 67% favor requiring vaccinations for contagious diseases like measles, compared to 33% who believe the government should not get involved.

Strong majority support around government mandates exists across party lines: Democrats (93%), Republicans (64%), Independents (60%).

STRONG BELIEF IN VACCINE SAFETY AND IMPORTANCE

Ohio voters overwhelmingly view vaccines as safe and important:

- 86% say vaccines are safe (52% “very safe,” 34% “safe”)
- 87% say vaccinating children is important (63% “very important”)

Confidence is especially high for long-established vaccines:

- Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR): 83% confident
- Polio: 85% confident

CORE DRIVERS OF SUPPORT: EFFECTIVENESS, SAFETY, AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Among supporters of vaccine requirements, the most compelling reasons are:

- Vaccines are effective at protecting children (88% “major reason”)
- Preventing the return of diseases like measles (85%)
- Responsibility to protect school environments (85%)

Safety also matters, with large majorities citing long-term use (78%) and extensive testing (82%) as major reasons.

Notably, **trust in government agencies is weaker**—only 36% cite it as a major reason, indicating support is grounded more in outcomes than institutional trust.

SOURCES OF OPPOSITION: AUTONOMY, DISTRUST, AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Among the 25% who oppose mandates, resistance is driven primarily by:

- **Parental choice** (83% “major reason”)
- Belief that government and pharmaceutical companies are too closely linked (60%)
- Concern vaccines are unsafe (46%) or more dangerous than diseases (53%)

Importantly, opposition is **less about denying disease risk**:

- Only 20% say vaccines aren’t needed because diseases are rare
- Only 26% say children are unlikely to get very sick

This indicates that skepticism is rooted more in trust and autonomy than in misunderstanding disease severity, illustrating the importance of health communication.

TRUST LANDSCAPE: DOCTORS LEAD, INSTITUTIONS LAG

Trust varies dramatically by source:

- **Highly trusted:** Personal doctors (70% “mostly/completely trust”)
- **Moderately trusted:** Pediatric groups and CDC
- **Low trust:** Social media (63% “little or no trust”)

89% of parents express confidence in their child’s physician to provide vaccine information.



Executive Summary Key Takeaways

1. **Pro-vaccine majority, but not monolithic:**
Strong overall support coexists with a sizable and motivated minority rooted in autonomy and distrust.
2. **Partisan polarization is significant:**
Attitudes toward mandates and safety differ sharply by party.
3. **Trust—not science—is the central fault line:**
Even supporters show limited trust in government, while opponents emphasize institutional skepticism.
4. **Doctors are the most effective messengers:** Personal healthcare providers remain the most credible source across groups.
5. **Traditional vaccines are less contested than newer ones:**
Confidence remains high for long-established vaccines but drops for COVID-19.

EFFORTS TO REDUCE VACCINE HESITANCY IN OHIO SHOULD CONSIDER:

- Trusted messengers (especially physicians)
- Clear communication of safety and long-term effectiveness
- Framing vaccination as both **personal protection and community responsibility**
- Addressing concerns about autonomy and institutional trust directly

Overall, Ohio voters trust routine childhood vaccinations and most support some degree of government requirements.

Research Methodology

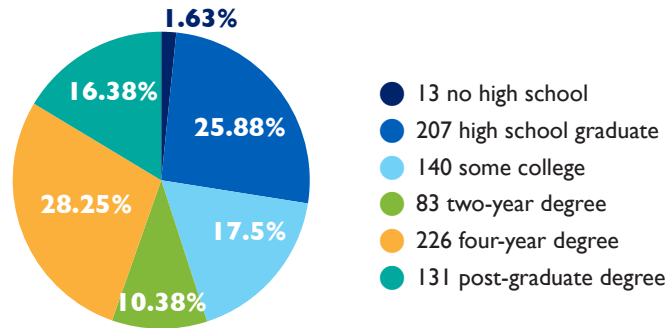
The Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Poll partners with the national polling firm YouGov to obtain representative samples for each survey based upon relevant demographic data.

- 800 Ohio voters
 - 436 female, 364 male
 - 660 white, 140 non-white
- Conducted from October 2 to October 14, 2025
- Margin of error of +/- 4.5 percentage points
- Sample's weighting reflects a +10 margin for Trump in the 2024 presidential race

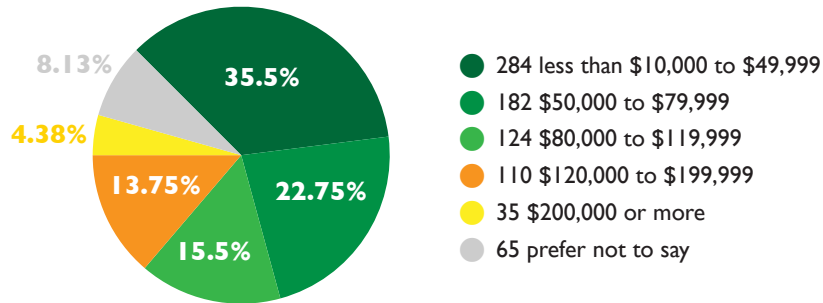


Sample Population

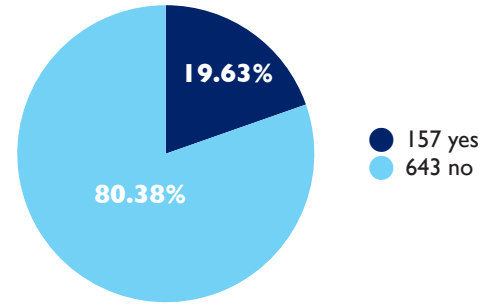
Education:



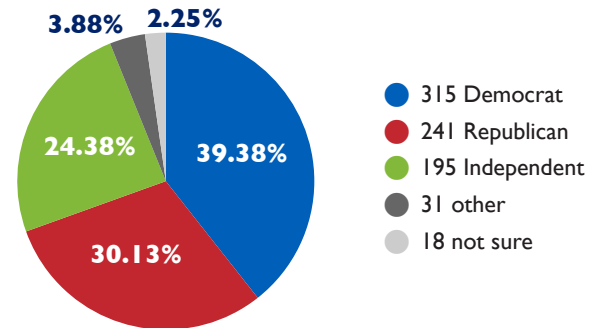
Family Income:



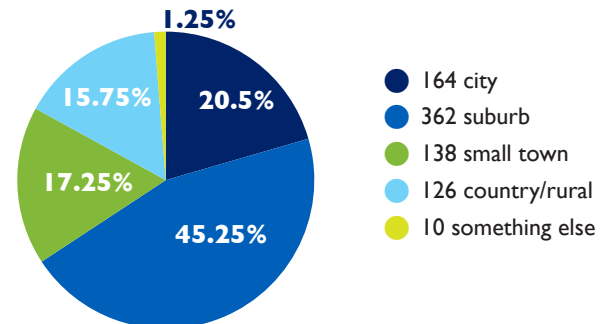
Children Under 18 in Household:



Political Party Identification:



City Type:



Poll Results At-a-Glance



Key Takeaway

Most Ohioans support childhood vaccines and trust their doctors, but confusion driven by mixed messaging continues to shape public opinion.



87%

of Ohioans think that it's **very important or important** that parents get their kids vaccinated.

86%

of Ohioans think routine vaccines are **very safe or safe** for most children.

89%

indicated they were **very confident or fairly confident** that their pediatrician/family physician provides them with the information they need to make informed decisions about vaccines.

75%

of Ohioans believe that parents **should be required** to have their children vaccinated against preventable diseases. Of those who believed parents should be required to have their children vaccinated:

88%

said a major reason they support routine childhood vaccine requirements is because they think routine childhood vaccines are **effective in protecting most children**

78%

said a major reason is because they believe childhood vaccines have been **proven safe** because they have been around for a decades

85%

said a major reason they support routine childhood vaccine requirements is because they think **diseases like measles will come back** if routine childhood vaccines are no longer required.

83%

indicate they **do not trust at all or only slightly trust their social media feeds** as a reliable source of vaccine information.

43%

of respondents felt **confident or very confident** in the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine; whereas 83 percent felt confident or very confident in the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine, and 85 percent in the polio vaccine.

88%

of Ohioans think that health insurers, including **Medicaid & Medicare, should be required to pay for vaccines** that individuals choose for themselves or family members.



Findings by Question

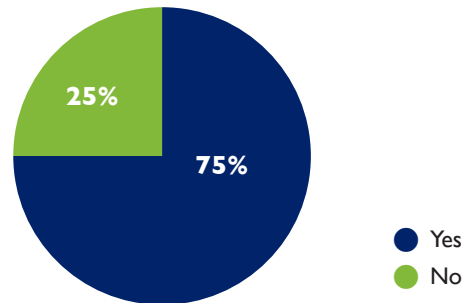
The survey questions were designed to draw information about the respondents' views towards routine vaccinations. When tabulating the final results from each respondent, several segments showed variation from the overall sample. For each question, these segments are displayed alongside the entire sample in order to compare their differences from the overall survey population.



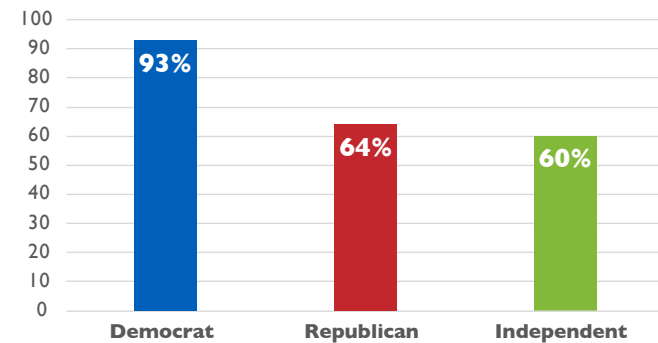
Public Support of Childhood Vaccines

Q: Do you think parents should be required to have their children vaccinated against preventable diseases?

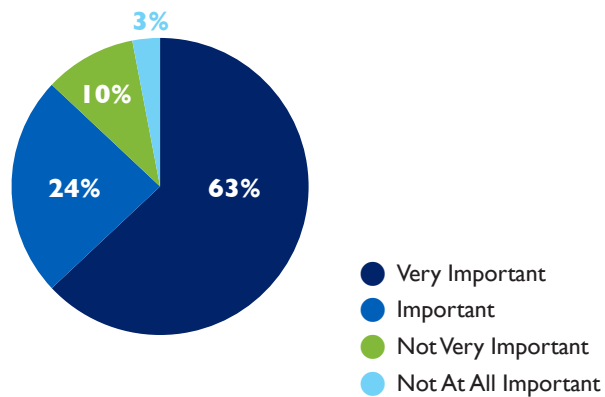
All responses



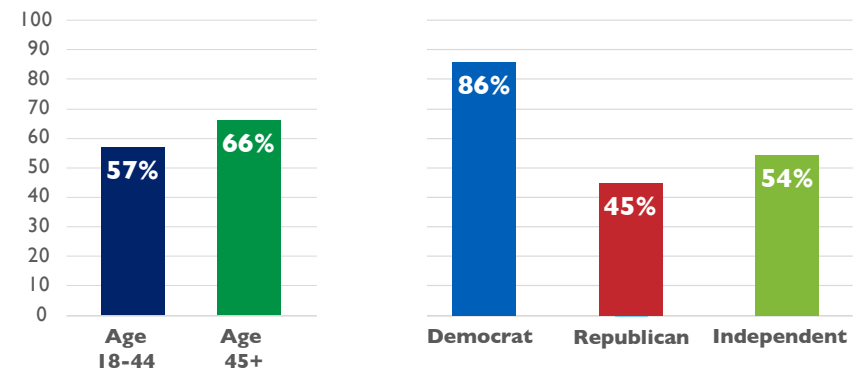
YES, children should be required to be vaccinated



Q: How important is it that parents get their children vaccinated?



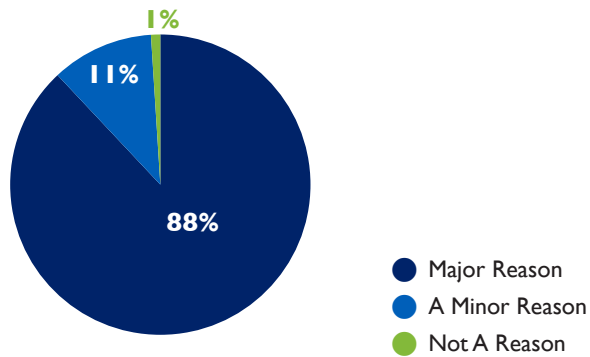
Of those who felt it's very important to get their children vaccinated:



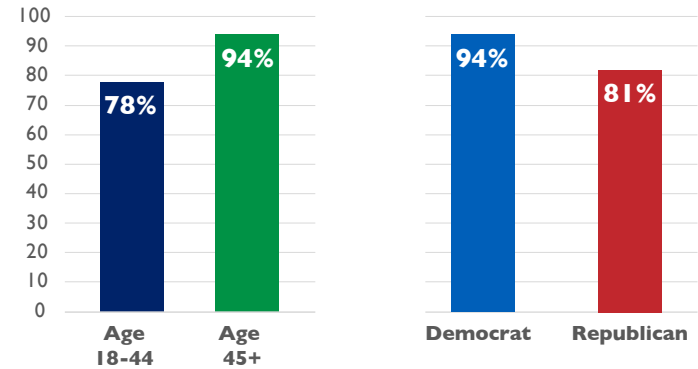
Reasoning For Public Support of Childhood Vaccinations*

*(Questions asked of those who said children should be required to be vaccinated)

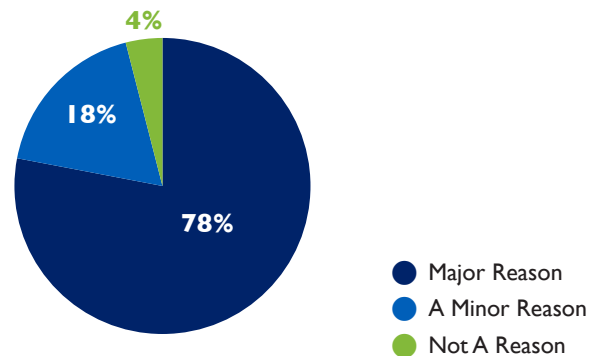
I think routine childhood vaccines are effective in protecting most children.



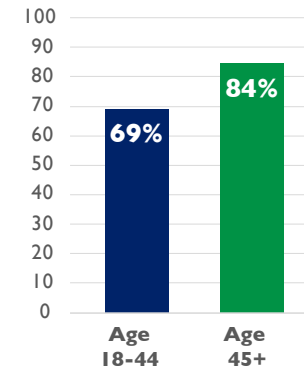
Of those who indicated this as a major reason for their support:



I think routine childhood vaccines have been proven safe because they have been around for decades.

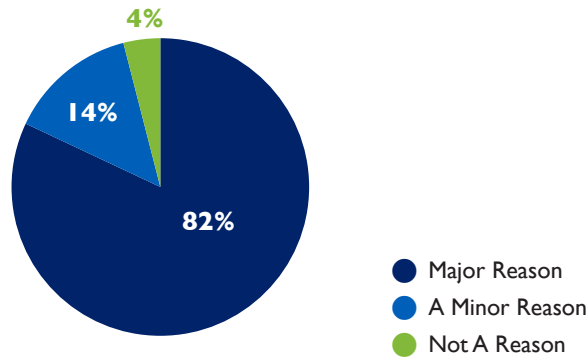


Of those who indicated this as a major reason for their support:

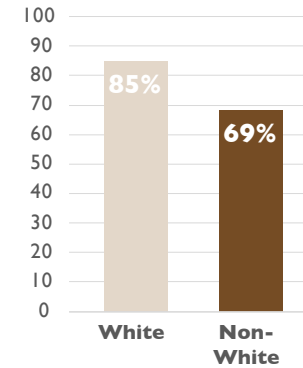




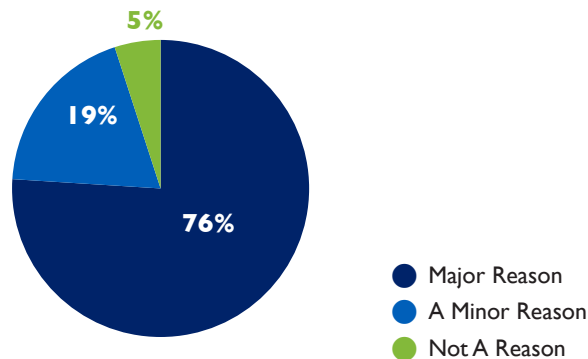
I think routine childhood vaccines have been proven safe because they have been well-tested.



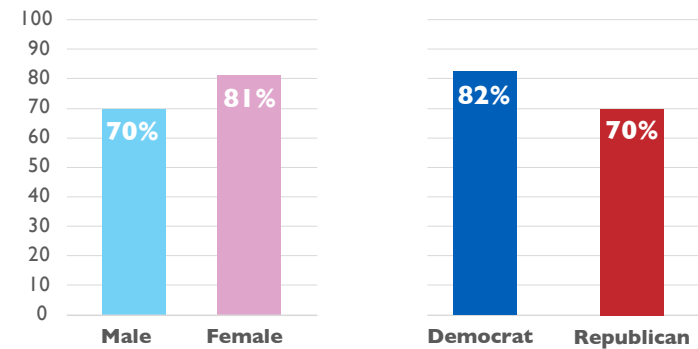
Of those who indicated this as a major reason for their support:



I think requiring routine vaccinations for most children is important to protect children who cannot get vaccinated for medical reasons.



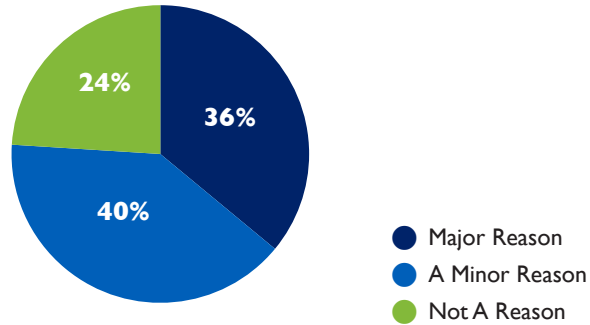
Of those who indicate this as a major reason for their support:



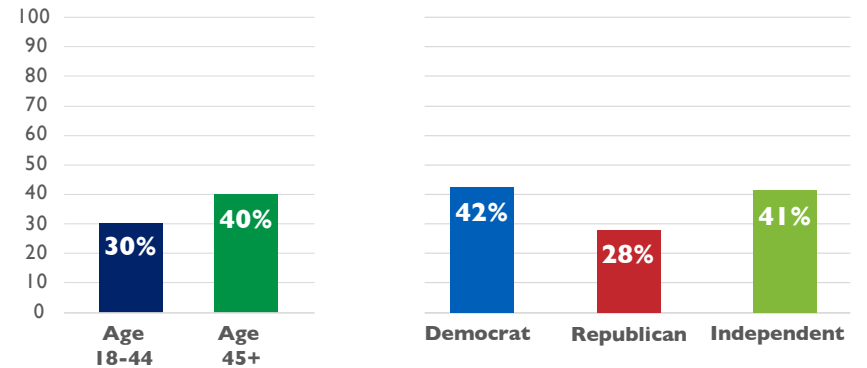
Reasoning For Public Support of Childhood Vaccinations* (continued)

*(Questions asked of those who said children should be required to be vaccinated)

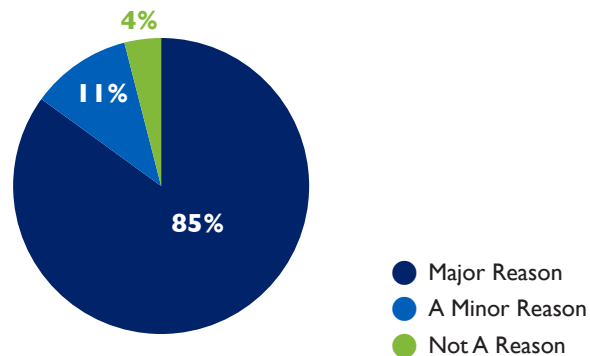
I trust the government agencies that approve routine childhood vaccines.



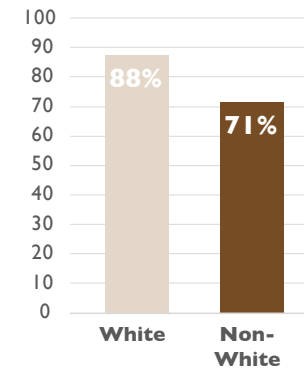
Of those who indicate this as a major reason for their support:



I think diseases like measles will come back if routine childhood vaccines are no longer required.

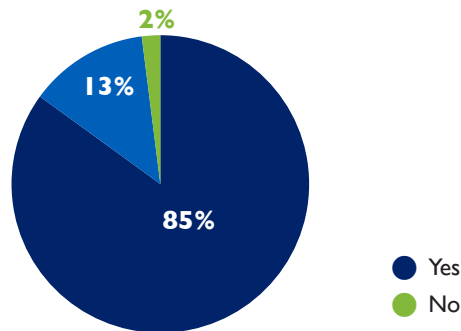


Of those who indicate this as a major reason for their support:

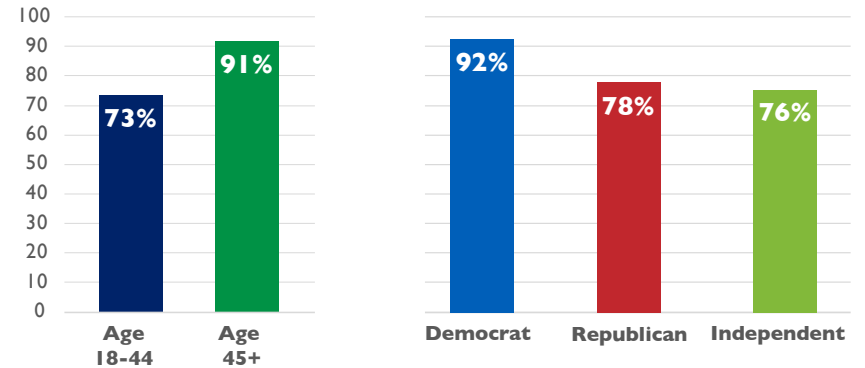




I think getting routine childhood vaccines is part of a family’s responsibilities to keep school environments healthy for children.



Of those who indicated this as a major reason for their support:



Reasoning For Opposition of Childhood Vaccinations*

**(Questions asked of those who said children should NOT be required to be vaccinated)*

Of the 25% of respondents who said parents should not be required to vaccinate their children, the following is notable:

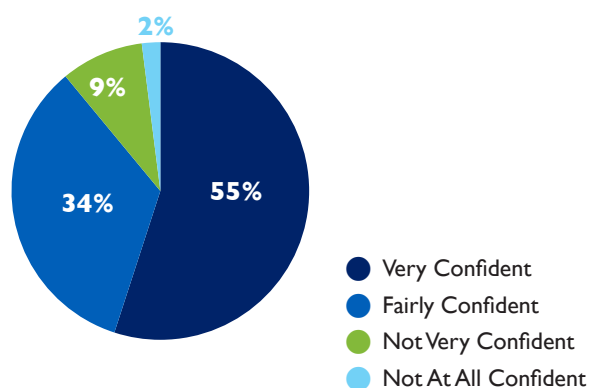
83%
indicated that their belief that it should be the parent’s choice to vaccinate their child was a major reason.

63%
said their belief that the government agencies that enforce routine childhood vaccine requirements are influenced too much by big companies was a major reason.

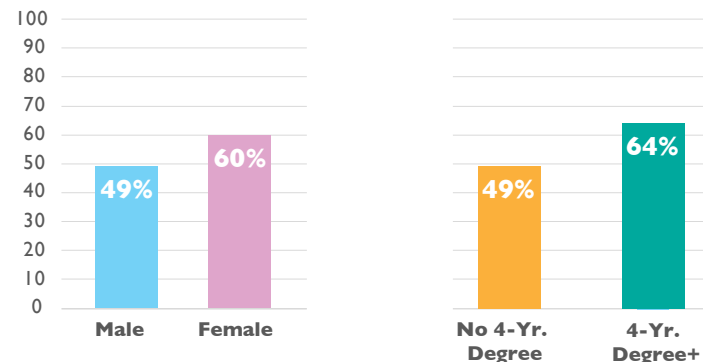
46%
said their belief that they are not safe for many children was a major reason.

Vaccine Credibility and Information Sources

Q: How confident do you feel that your pediatrician/family physician provides you with the information you need to make informed decisions about vaccines?

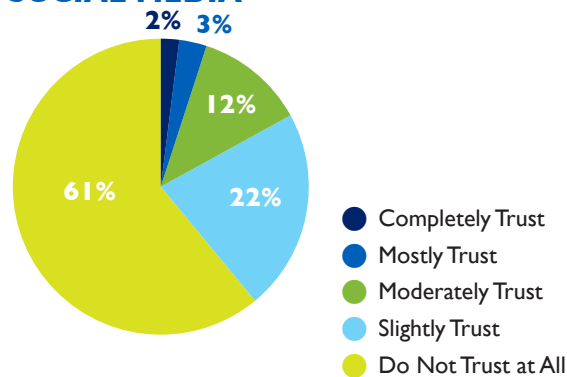


Of those who are very confident:

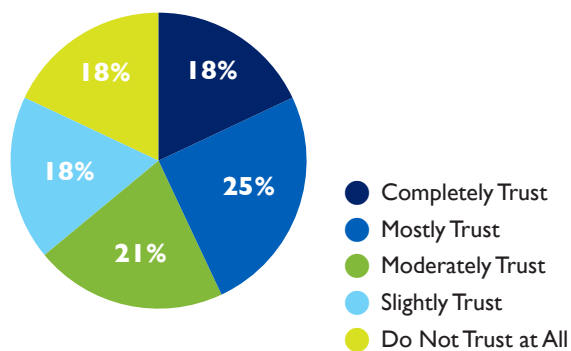


Q: In general, how much do you trust each of the following to provide reliable information about vaccines? (Asked of parents) — Trust in health figures matrix

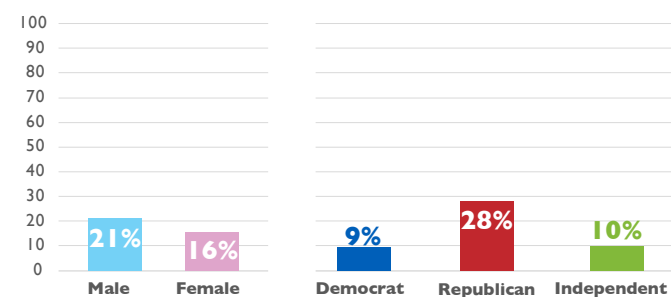
SOCIAL MEDIA



CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

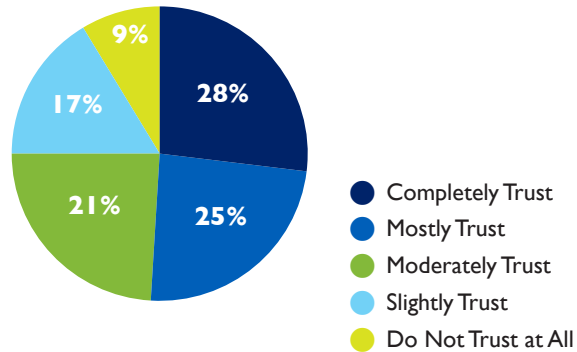


Of those who do not trust the CDC at all:

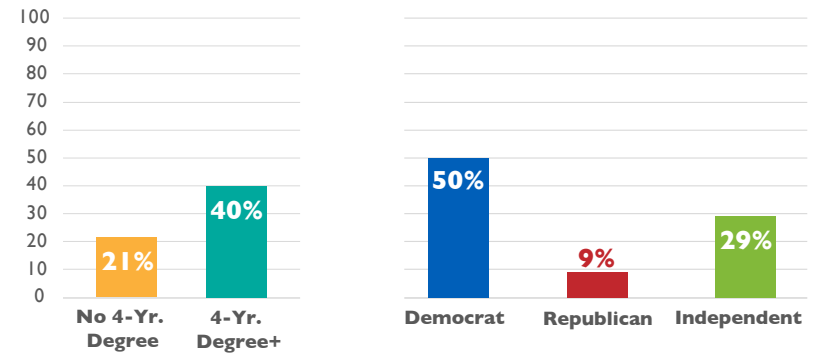


Q: CONTINUED: In general, how much do you trust each of the following to provide reliable information about vaccines? (Asked of parents) — Trust in health figures matrix

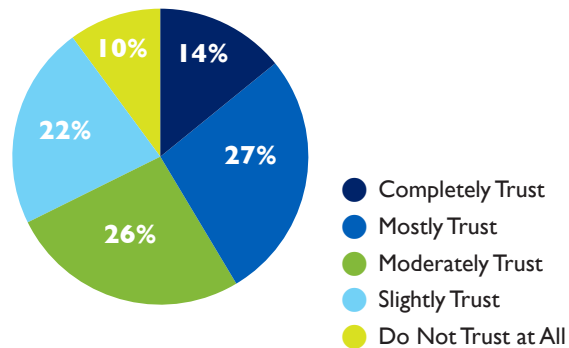
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS (AAP)



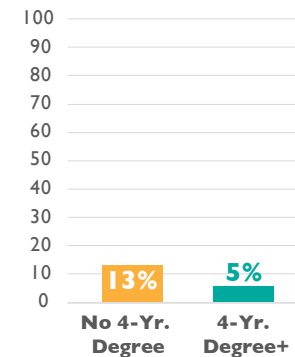
Of those who completely trust the AAP:



LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES

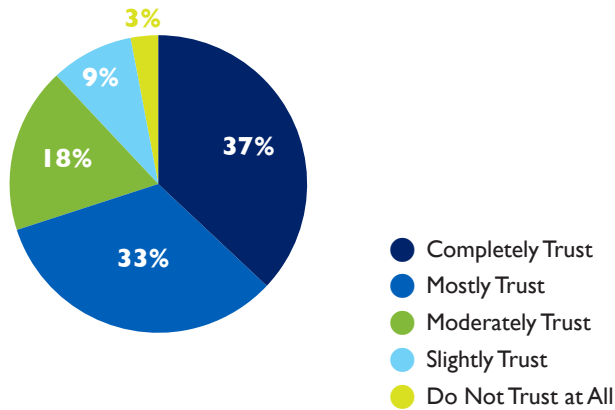


Of those who do not trust local health authorities at all:

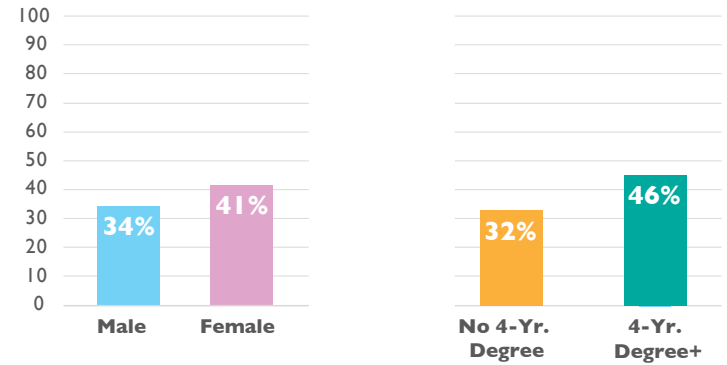


Q: CONTINUED: In general, how much do you trust each of the following to provide reliable information about vaccines? (Asked of parents) — Trust in health figures matrix

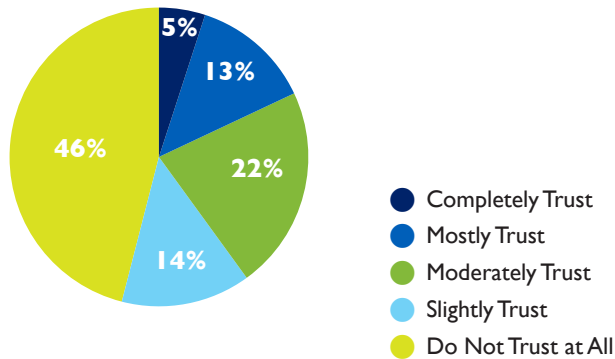
MY OWN DOCTOR



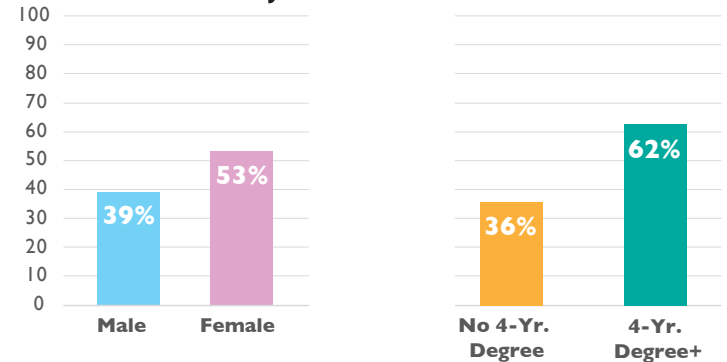
Of those who completely trust their own doctor:



ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR., THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

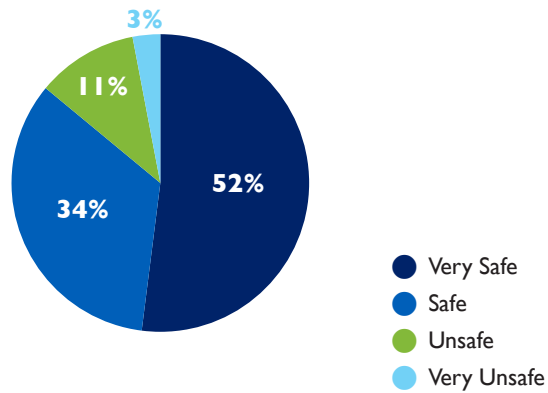


Of those who do not trust RFK Jr. at all:

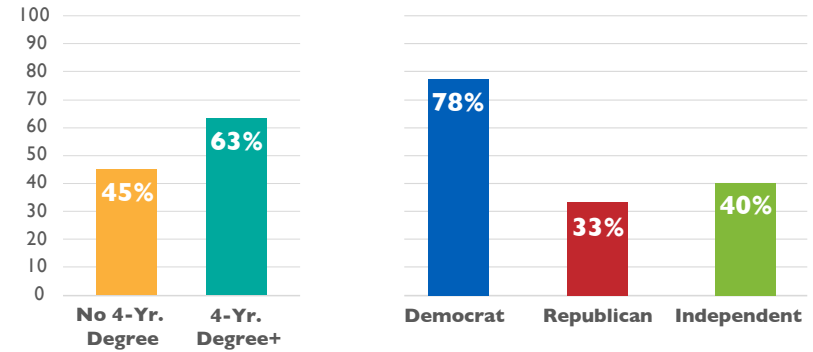


Vaccine Safety Perceptions

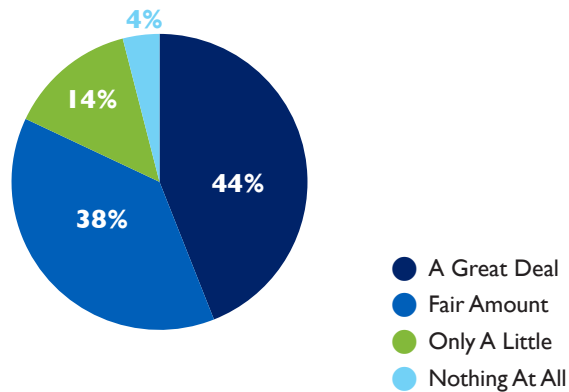
Q: How safe do you think routine vaccines are for most children?



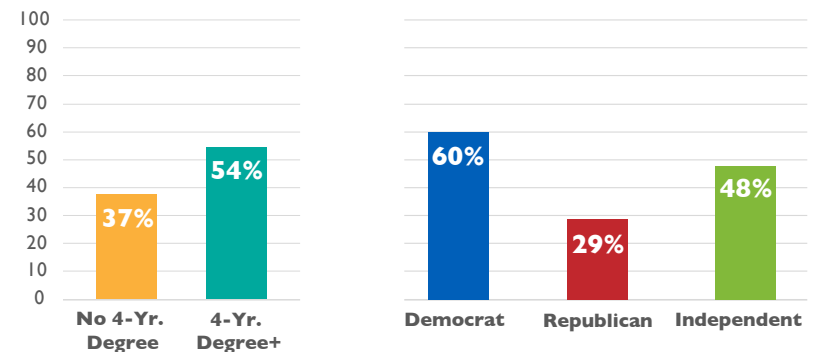
Of those who believe routine vaccines are very safe:



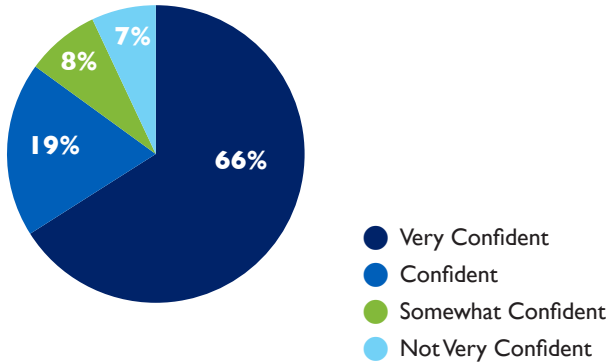
Q: How much have you heard about the benefits of vaccinations for children?



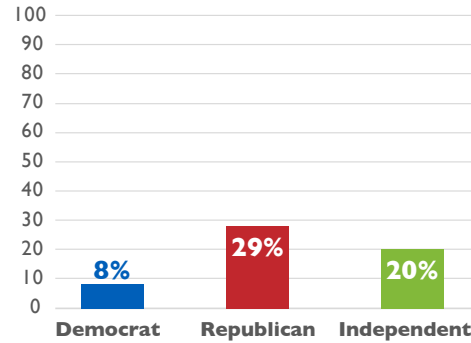
Of those who have heard a great deal about the benefits of childhood vaccinations:



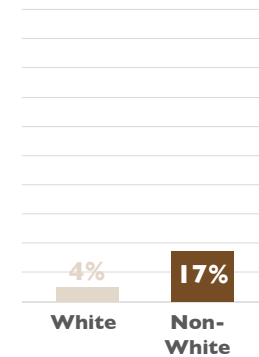
How confident are you that the **POLIO vaccine is safe for children?**



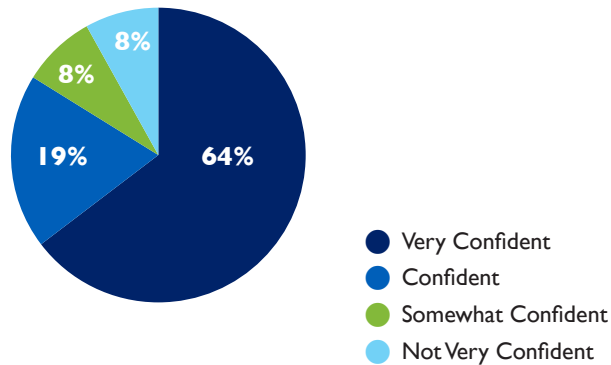
Of those who are confident in the Polio vaccine:



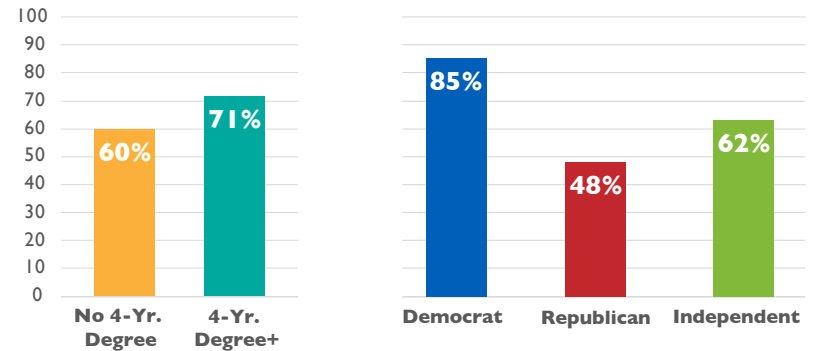
Of those who are not very confident in the Polio vaccine:



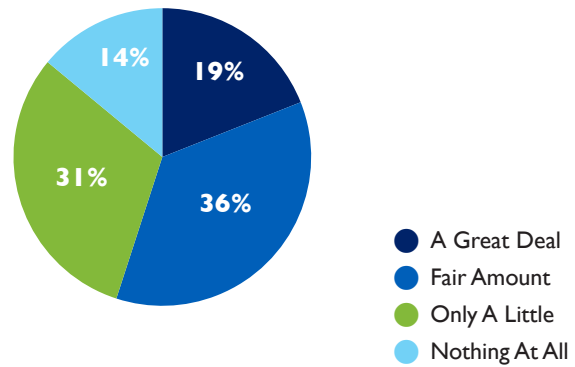
How confident are you that the **MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA (MMR) vaccine is safe for children?**



Of those who are very confident in the MMR vaccine:

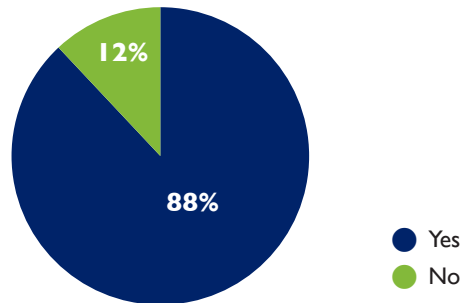


Q: How much have you heard about the dangers of vaccinations for children?

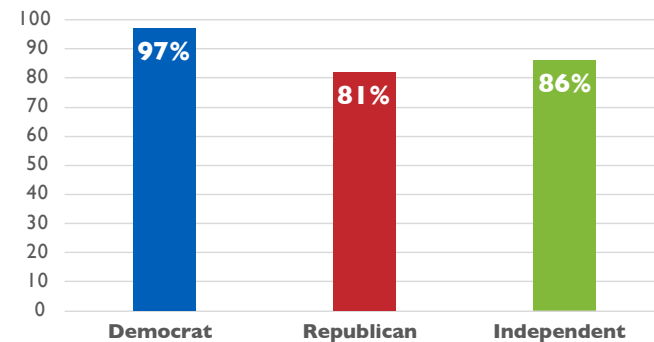


Vaccine Access, Mandates & Coverage

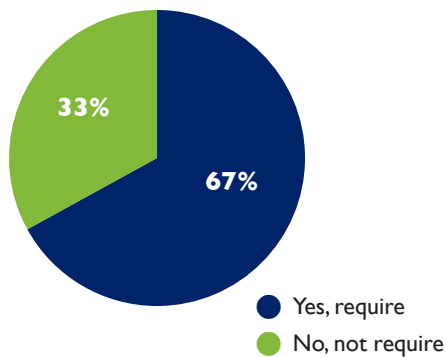
Q: Should health insurers, including Medicaid or Medicare, be required to pay for vaccines that individuals choose for themselves or family members?



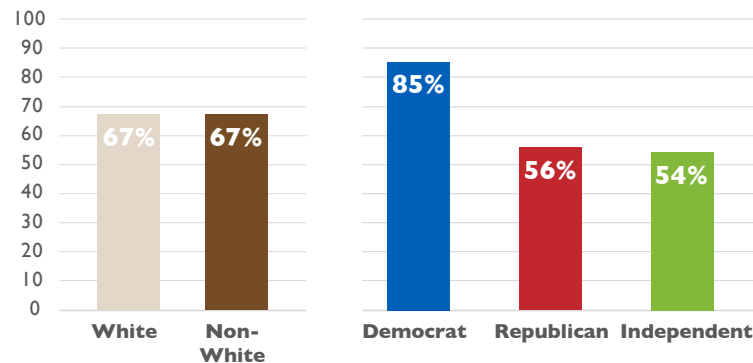
Of those who agree health insurers should be required to pay for vaccines:



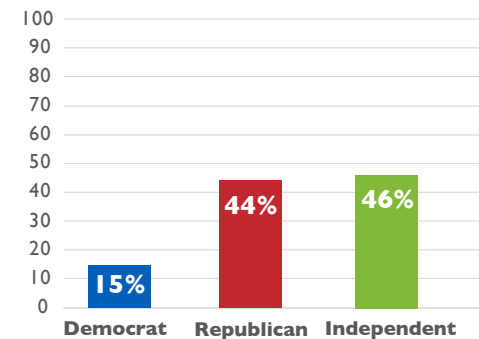
Q: Do you think the government should require all parents to have their children vaccinated against contagious diseases such as measles, or do you think that's something the government should stay out of?



Of those who believe the government should require parents to vaccinate their children:



Of those who believe the government should stay out of it:





Thank you

to the **Bowling Green State University Democracy and Public Policy Research Network** for their work to develop and analyze this poll to gauge public opinion on childhood immunizations in Ohio.

If you have questions about the poll, or Ohio AAP's work around childhood immunizations, please contact Lory Sheeran Winland, MPA, Director of Immunization Programs, at lwinland@ohioaap.org.

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American Academy of Pediatrics

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