

School Nurses & Local Health Unit Collaboration: A Paradigm to Decrease Vaccine Resistance Among Parents & Caregivers

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Background

- Suffolk County Department of Health Services Immunization Action Program nurses
 - > Interface and partner with school nurses in the county
 - > SCDHS nurses answer questions
 - > Advise the school nurses regarding immunization policies and practices
 - Based on New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) school immunization requirements and the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations.

Background

- Studies indicate that how immunization information is presented to parents and care givers can affect a parent's decision to vaccinate
- Vaccine hesitancy and refusal are endangering the community by leaving not just those who choose to either delay or refuse vaccines
 - > also those who for medical reasons are unable to be vaccinated

Background



- Nurses are experiencing larger numbers of parents who are resistant to immunizations
- Data indicates that most parents who have reservations regarding immunizations will allow their children to be vaccinated after speaking with a health care professional who is most often a nurse

Background

- ACIP and CDC published updated immunization schedules annually
- Other changes occur which are implemented but do not appear in the schedules until annual updates occur
- Often difficult for school nurses to keep current

Background

- SCDHS collaborates with NYSDOH to provide immunization information to school nurses in the county
- Previously NYSDOH conducted annual updates for school nurses
 - > Updates have been cancelled due to budget constraints
 - > Not all school nurses were able to attend annual updates

Objectives



- An education program was implemented
 - > To update school nurses on latest immunization practices
 - > To give school nurses the tools to discuss immunizations with parents and guardians to resolve vaccine resistance

Statement of Problem

- School nurses are experiencing larger numbers of parents who are resistant to immunizations
- While laws vary from state, all states have some form of immunization regulations which apply to school children
 - NYS has religious and medical exemptions

Statement of Problem

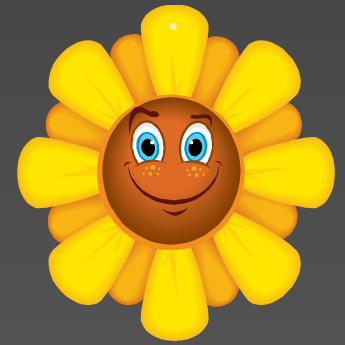
- It is becoming increasingly difficult for school nurses to convince some parents to comply with immunization regulations
- Nurses are the most trusted professionals
 - > Nurses need to build on this trust to empower parents to make appropriate immunization choices for their children



Activities

- Educational program was developed to
 - > Update School Nurses on the most current immunization practices
 - > Present a paradigm which gives nurses a tool to systematically discuss immunizations
- Implement and maintain telephone call in for school nurse questions

Activities



- Educational program using CDC materials and paradigm for speaking with parents was presented at
 - > Suffolk County School Nurses Association meetings
 - > BOCES staff development meetings
 - > Staff development meetings at largest school districts in the county
- Network with officers of Suffolk County School Nurses Association
- Suffolk County School Nurses Association list serve was used to communicate with school nurses

CASE Implementation



- ◉ A paradigm has been developed which gives nurses a tool to systematically discuss immunizations
- ◉ The CASE method enlists the use of empathy and common ground to begin conversations, progresses to the science, and then concludes with nurse's advice to vaccinate
- ◉ Studies consistently show that parents trust their children's health care providers in these matters.
- ◉ Information on vaccines should be provided in a proactive rather than reactive atmosphere
- ◉ Anticipate parents/patients concerns and answer questions before they are asked

CASE Implementation



- CASE is a four step framework for communicating immunization science. The paradigm consists of these four steps:
- 1.) **C**orroborate: acknowledge the parent's concerns and find some point on which to agree. This sets the tone for the discussion;
- 2.) **A**bout me: describe what one has done to build a knowledge base and expertise;
- 3.) **S**cience: describe what the science says;
- 4.) **E**xplain/advise: give advice to the parent/patient based on the science.

CASE Implementation

- Paradigm was developed by Alison Singer, president of the Autism Science Foundation
- She believes that if parents could find common ground with their children's nurses
 - > The parents would be more receptive to listening to the scientific evidence refuting causal links between vaccines and autism and other purported conditions

Statement of Problem

- The CDC data indicates that most parents who have reservations regarding immunizations will allow their children to be vaccinated after speaking with a health care professional
- School nurses are uniquely placed to provide the needed information to help parents make appropriate immunization choices for their children.

Statement of Problem

- ◎ Studies indicate that parents fall into three groups
 - > 1.) Those that do not question vaccines
 - > 2.) Those who oppose vaccines at all costs regardless of any information provided to them by a health care provider
 - > 3.) Those who can be influenced by information provided to them by a health care provider

Outcomes

- ❖ The nurses were very enthusiastic about the CASE paradigm and incorporated CASE into their teaching about vaccines
- ❖ In light of local outbreaks of disease the nurses hope fewer cases of vaccine preventable diseases will be introduced into the community due to a highly immunized population of children
- ❖ Anecdotal feedback indicates that parents are opting to fully vaccinate their children following the use of CASE
- ❖ Fewer number of children are being excluded from school due to parental compliance with immunization requirements

Outcomes

- ❖ A future randomized controlled trial would add data to support the use of CASE
- ❖ School nurses indicated an increased knowledge of the immunization schedules following the teaching



Selected References

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[Leask J](#), [Chapman S](#), [Hawe P](#), [Burgess M](#). What maintains parental support for vaccination when challenged by anti-vaccination messages? A qualitative study. *Vaccine*. 2006 Nov 30;24(49-50):7238-45. Epub 2006 May 23.

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◉ Thank you

