

Washington State Licensed Child Care Facility Directors' Perspectives on Childhood Immunization

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Background: Directors of child care facilities in Washington State are required to educate enrolled parents about the importance of immunizations and monitor the up-to-date immunization status of enrolled children.

Objective: To determine Washington State child care facility directors' compliance with state immunization education and monitoring requirements and the role of directors' immunization attitudes and beliefs on compliance.

Methods: We mailed a self-administered survey to 2000 randomly selected child care facility directors in Washington State. The primary outcome measures were reported compliance with state requirements to educate parents about the importance of immunizations and monitor the immunization status of enrolled children. In univariate analysis, we used logistic regression to test the association of the primary outcome variables with several predictor variables (directors' immunization attitudes and beliefs). We used multivariate logistic regression analysis to determine the independent association between our primary outcome variables and significant predictors after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics.

Results: Our response rate was 28%. The majority of respondents worked at facilities with a licensed capacity of <25 children, had ≥11 years of experience, and were parents themselves. Overall, 68% agreed that they educated enrolled parents about the importance of immunizations and 90% agreed that they monitored the immunization status of enrolled children. However, 60% were concerned that children might have a serious side effect from an immunization, 51% were concerned that any one of the childhood immunizations might not be safe, and 11% were distrustful of the immunization information they received. These beliefs were associated with a statistically significant decreased likelihood of educating parents about immunization (adjusted Odds Ratios (aORs): .57, .46, .19, respectively) and monitoring immunization status of children (aORs: .32, .32, .19, respectively).

Conclusions: Most Washington State child care facility directors are compliant with state requirements for immunization education and monitoring. A substantial number of directors are concerned about vaccine safety, however, and these concerns decrease the likelihood of these requirements being followed.