

## Child Care Centers and Flu Preparedness: There's Work to Be Done

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Every year we hear so much about flu prevention by encouraging vaccination in combination with good handwashing and other preventive techniques, such as the proper way to cough and sneeze on your sleeve but not your hands. Yet as vigilant as we might be in educating our patients about how to avoid exposure to the flu or other upper respiratory viral infection, the disease does spread—and one of the places that might be ripe for such spreading are child care centers where young children are in

close contact with each other. So how prepared are child care centers to prepare for the possibility of a flu pandemic. Shope et al. ([10.1542/peds.2016-3690](#)) opted to investigate this question by doing a telephone-based survey of child care center directors randomly selected from a national database who were asked about their centers preparedness for pandemic influenza. Areas of inquiry focused on general infection control, communication with families and staff, seasonal steps taken to control the spread of this virus, use of health consultants such as ourselves, the quality of child care and what barriers may make preparation for a pandemic easier said than done. The survey was done twice—in 2008 and 2016 (before and after the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic).

Unfortunately while one might have hoped that steps might be taken after the 2009 pandemic, only 7% of directors had taken steps to better prepare their centers even if that director had experienced the 2009 pandemic. The more years of director experience and usage of health consultants, the better the preparedness steps taken. When there was no access to health consultation, preparedness steps were less likely to be taken. So why did we publish a child care study in our journal on flu preparation? Because we can help our child care centers be better prepared for next year's flu by starting now to make sure they have taken the preparedness steps needed. If you need a refresher as well, the *AAP's Red Book* is ready and willing to help out. Check out this article and then check out the local child care centers where your patients

are enrolled to make sure they are better prepared next year than they currently appear to be when it comes to preventing the spread of influenza.

- [Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness Against Pediatric Deaths: 2010–2014](#)
- [School-Located Influenza Vaccinations: A Randomized Trial](#)
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