

The Language and Immunization for Kids Study (LINKS): Identifying Public Health Strategies to Engage Families Who Prefer a Language Other Than English in Childhood Vaccine Uptake

Statement of Problem

As child health researchers and physicians, we know childhood [immunization programs](#) and [coalitions](#) are among our nation's most important and effective child health interventions. These programs ensure children receive protection from potentially life-threatening conditions such as measles, polio and hepatitis B. They [help children](#) in every U.S. county, parish, borough, state, and territory, even if children are uninsured or families lack the ability to pay.

Ensuring childhood immunization programs remain strong and can continue to reach all children is a child health priority. This includes attention to language access—most often referring to interpreting (spoken, sign language) and translation (written).

[Research suggests](#) there may be uneven childhood vaccine coverage for children in some language communities. Similarly, [National Immunization Survey](#) data suggests children ages 19-35 months and born outside the U.S. may have lower rates of selected vaccination coverage than other U.S. children.

This may be a sign of gaps in vaccine outreach, education and delivery in languages spoken by families in those communities. And our team's [quality improvement](#) work suggests language access remains a significant barrier to childhood vaccination education and access.

Description

We know solutions exist.

Co-investigator [Dr. Elizabeth Dawson-Hahn](#), a [University of Washington](#) pediatrician and public health researcher, and her team identified numerous public health [case studies](#) describing strategies for promoting vaccine access among communities who speak languages other than English.

With this project, we aim to systematically describe and share successful strategies that childhood immunization programs and coalitions have used to reach families who speak languages other than English.

To collect this information, we are conducting a national survey of childhood immunization programs and immunization coalitions.

Next Steps

By hearing directly from programs and coalitions, we hope to learn from their on-the-ground experience in our efforts to ensure children whose families speak languages other than English are included in vaccine outreach, education and delivery.

We also hope to document shared challenges that may benefit from policy changes or prioritization from funders focused on promoting child health.

We plan to share results in summer 2026.

This project page was last updated in March 2026.

Related Resources

Vaccines for Healthy Kids | Tool for Community Leaders

As part of this project, the LINKS team developed a presentation tool for community leaders to use when sharing vaccine information to community members. The presentation slide deck uses plain language to address vaccine safety, accessibility and navigation, and includes answers to a few common questions.

The slide deck is available in [Arabic](#), [Dari](#), [English](#), [Kinyarwanda](#), [Nepali](#), [Pashto](#), and [Swahili](#).

Multilingual Health Education Alliance (M-HEAL)

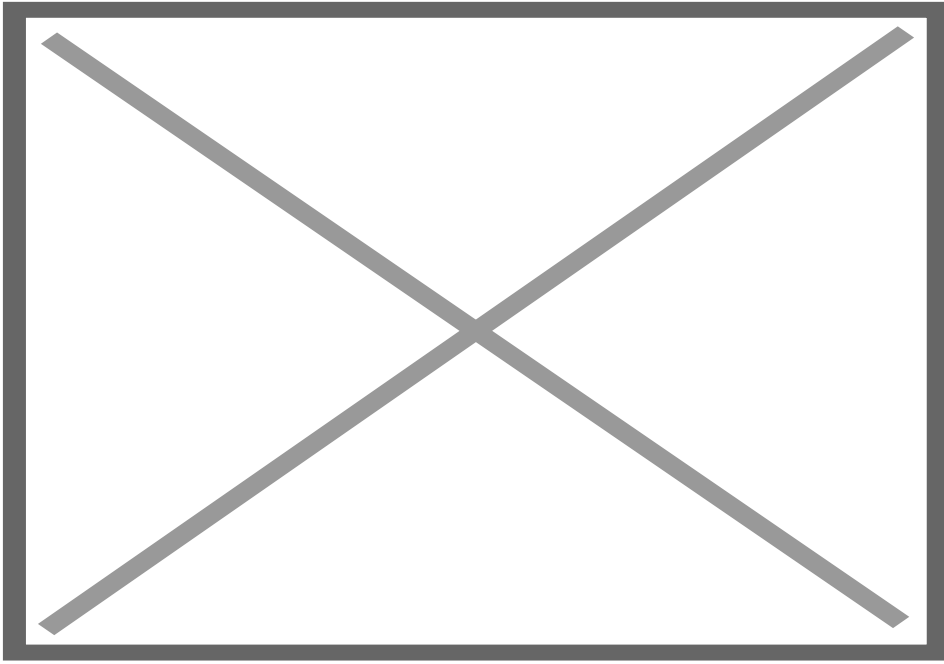
The Multilingual Health Education Alliance (M-HEAL)—a partnership with refugee and immigrant health teams at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, University of Washington, Denver Health, NRC-RIM and MHEDS—worked with parents, youth, public health professionals, clinicians, and resettlement staff from Congolese (DRC), Ukrainian, and Afghan newcomer communities to create childhood vaccine information in multiple languages.

These posters, videos and brochures share information about vaccine safety and childhood vaccine schedules, including COVID-19 vaccines. They are available in 5 languages: Dari, Pashto, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, and Ukrainian. **These resources can be viewed and downloaded [via Dropbox](#).**

These materials and videos can be used in clinic waiting rooms, doctors’ offices, resettlement agencies, community-based organizations, school clinics, and shared on social media.

Some examples:

- The Afghan community created a brochure that talks about vaccine safety and schedules. *(top left)*
- The Ukrainian community created a poster that highlights the safety of vaccines and the protection provided by them. *(top right)*
- The Congolese community created a video that answered frequently asked questions about vaccines. *(bottom)*



Publicly-available Multilingual Vaccine Education Resources Recommended by LINKS Participants

[Translated Vaccine Information Statements](#) | Immunize.org

Translations created by state DOH

- [Vacúnalos Por Su Bien](#) | Colorado Department of Health
- [What are the vaccine requirements for individuals who move to CT as refugees or humanitarian parolees?](#) | Connecticut Department of Health
- [Measles Facts](#) | Minnesota Department of Health
- [Vaccines for Infants, Children, and Adolescents](#) | Minnesota Department of Health
- [School and Child Care Immunizations Information for Families](#) | Washington State Department of Health
- [Fact Sheets](#) | Wisconsin Department of Health
 - (search for others or click the vaccine-specific links at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/vpd.htm>)
- [Vaccine Information Videos](#) | Vermont Department of Health

Translations created by city and county DOH

- ["Proteja a su familia contra las enfermedades prevenibles por vacunas"](#) and related resources | Nashua, NH
- ["Grow Up Guide"](#) with links to free, colorful, printable materials in many languages | Philadelphia, PA
- [Parent notification letter templates](#) and related resources in multiple languages | Clark County, WA

Translations created by immunization coalitions and/or members

- ["Protect Against Measles" Campaign](#) (Spanish/English) | Immunize Kansas Coalition
- ["Key Resources"](#) (multiple languages) | Immunize Kansas Coalition
- ["Vaccine Fears Overturned by Facts" series](#) (Spanish/English) | Immunize Kansas Coalition
- ["Prevent Disease, Get Immunized"](#) | Pennsylvania Immunization Coalition

Translations created by other nonprofit organizations

- [Migration Health Initiative](#) (previously NRC-RIM)
- [Unity](#) (United for Adolescent Vaccination) in Spanish
- [Vermont Language Justice Project](#)

Books available to print or order (nonprofit)

- [Ultra Germ Fighters](#) comic from Seattle & King County Department of Health
- [The Immunizers](#) comic from Philadelphia Department of Health and Mighty Writers

Books available to order (commercial)

- *Ava Antibody Explains Your Body and Vaccines* available in English and Spanish
- *Baby Medical School: My Doctor's Visit* available in English and Spanish

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PolicyLab Leads

Katherine Yun MD, MHS

Faculty Member

Katherine Yun's primary interest is refugee and immigrant health, specifically the well-being of children in immigrant families in the United States. Her work has focused on the prevalence of chronic, non-communicable conditions and insurance coverage among refugees in the US, differences in primary and dental care utilization by children in different types of immigrant families, and evaluation of health care navigation and related programs for refugee communities. Current projects seek to address language barriers in behavioral health care and blunt the impact of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) on refugees and migrants.

Dr. Yun received her medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 2006 and completed her residency in pediatrics at Yale University in 2009. Between 2009-2011, she was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar and earned her Masters in Health Sciences Research from the Yale University School of Medicine. While at Yale, she was the supervising physician in the Yale-New Haven Hospital Pediatric Refugee Clinic, a co-recipient of Connecticut's Myra M. Oliver Award for going "above the call of duty" to support refugees and immigrants. CHOP's Refugee Health Program, led by Dr. Mary Fabio, is a recipient of

the Gold Door Award from [HIAS-PA](#), “Honoring those who lead the way in support of immigrants and refugees.”

Dr. Yun has also worked in Europe, where she supported research on the health impact of human trafficking, and Central Asia, where she taught middle school. From 2014-2018, Dr. Yun served on the Executive Committee of the Section on International Child Health at the American Academy of Pediatrics. She currently serves on the [Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee](#) for the Society of Refugee Healthcare Providers. Dr. Yun and her husband live in Philadelphia, PA.



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Team

Nadège U. Mudenge

Clinical Research Coordinator

Nadège U. Mudenge (she/her) is a clinical research coordinator at PolicyLab and Clinical Futures at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). She works with the Family Bridge Program, a randomized controlled trial to improve access and quality of care for uninsured or Medicaid-enrolled children, including children in families who speak Spanish, Vietnamese and Somali.

Nadège also works with the Immigrant Child Health Screening Program and the Multilingual Health Education Alliance. She serves as core faculty for the Short Course on Multilingual Approaches to Research Studies (MARS).

Prior to joining CHOP, Nadège worked as a professional medical interpreter across various Philadelphia health centers and hospitals, leveraging her fluency in French, Kiswahili (Swahili), Kinyarwanda, Lingala and Kirundi to facilitate effective communication in health care settings. Additionally, she served as a program coordinator at Nationalities Service Center, where she supported immigrants and refugees in acclimating to life in the United States.

Nadège earned her BS in psychology from Drexel University, and she is currently pursuing a post-baccalaureate pre-med program at the same institution. With a deep-rooted passion for medicine, she aspires to continue her path towards becoming a physician and making a positive impact on the lives of others.



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Kathryn Saulinas (she/her) is the multimedia manager at PolicyLab working to leverage innovative communication tools to elevate the center's research and profile among key stakeholders. She provides communications support across the center and collaborates with investigators within the Health Equity and Adolescent Health & Well-being Portfolios to execute strategic and creative dissemination of relevant research to policymakers, communities and providers. Ms. Saulinas is responsible for setting and executing PolicyLab's social media and video strategies. She also provides graphic design and data visualization support to the center.

Prior to joining PolicyLab, Ms. Saulinas most recently served as a marketing and communications specialist for Shriners Children's. Ms. Saulinas received a BA in English from Bloomsburg University.



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