

Protecting Our Gold Coast

A conversation about childhood vaccination coverage and practical strategies for local practices.





The Gold Coast Challenge

Australia hit the gold standard of 95% coverage for five-year-olds in 2020. However, the Gold Coast is falling behind national averages.

86%

Age 1

Gold Coast

(National: 92%)

85%

Age 2

Gold Coast

(National: 90%)

89%

Age 5

Gold Coast

(National: 93%)

81%

Age 1

GC Hinterland

(National: 92%)

71%

Age 2

GC Hinterland

(National: 90%)

82%

Age 5

GC Hinterland

(National: 93%)

Understanding the Barriers

Why are Gold Coast families missing vital vaccinations? National survey data reveals two key categories of challenges.

Access Barriers

- Not easy to get an appointment
- Unable to travel to appointment
- Unable to afford costs
- Cannot discuss vaccination in preferred language with doctor or nurse

Acceptance Barriers

- Believes vaccines are not safe/effective
- Would not feel guilty if child got disease
- Feels distressed about vaccinating
- Does not trust information from doctor or nurse
- People close to them don't support vaccination



1. Access Barriers

These are the blockers we can address directly in our practices:

1

Timely appointment

Nearly 25% of parents find it difficult to get an appointment.

2

Financial Concerns

Over 20% of parents weren't able to afford costs associated with vaccination.

3

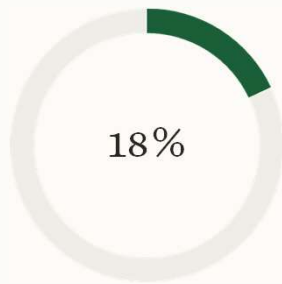
Competing Priorities

About 24% simply didn't prioritise vaccination over other things.

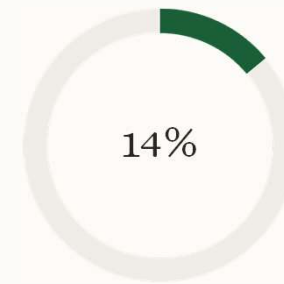


2. Acceptance Barriers

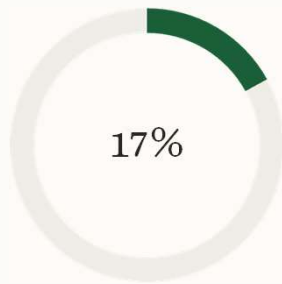
This is all about trust. We're asking parents to give something to a healthy child—that requires an enormous leap of faith.



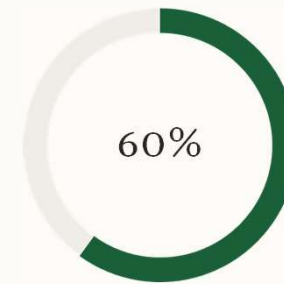
Do not believe vaccines are safe for their child



Do not believe vaccines are effective



Do not trust information from their child's doctor or nurse



Feel actively distressed or anxious about vaccinating child

Solution 1: Streamline Your Workflow

Eliminate the friction that causes one-in-four parents to miss appointments. Make it easier for families to say yes.

Automate and Normalise

Book the next vaccination appointment immediately - when a parent is in for a 6-week check, book the 4-month appointment right there.

Set Reminders and Recalls

Use automated SMS messaging for upcoming vaccinations and missed doses.

Improve Accessibility

Offer extended hours, drop-in vaccine appointments, and child-friendly spaces.



Solution 2: The Art of Connection

For a parent to truly hear us and act on our advice, five crucial things must happen during the consultation:

01

Parents have their say

The parent believes they've been able to communicate what's important to them.

02

You truly listened

They have to believe that you've heard it.

03

You understood

They have to believe that you've got it right

04

Clear advice is given

They clearly understand what you're asking them to do.

05

Belief in ability to act

They are confident they can actually do what you're asking of them.

If you haven't got one, two and three right, they're not going to go away and do what you're telling them





The Golden Rule: Ask Before Tell

The Problem with Telling

We often answer questions parents haven't asked, leading to forgotten advice. By the time they leave, vital information is lost.

The Power of Asking

When we help parents articulate their own concerns, the answers stick. They remember the information because it's relevant to their own questions.

Just like clinical questions, information gains meaning when it directly addresses your specific needs. Our role is to discover and help create those questions.

Putting it into practice

So, what does it look like in practice? It comes down to four key skills.



Be Ready

Take a moment before each interaction to be fully present and ready to give your undivided attention.



Cultivate Curiosity

Focus on understanding the person beyond their problem.



Listen with Your Whole Body

Actively engage all your senses, paying attention to tone, body language, and intuition.



Practice Empathy

Demonstrate empathy through body language, eye contact, and verbal responses to make others feel seen, heard, understood, and accepted.



Navigating Vaccine Hesitancy with Confidence



Roll with Resistance

Acknowledge their differing view and keep the door open for future discussions. Don't force it if the time isn't right.



Seek to Understand

If you have time, discover what's truly driving their belief. Is it concerns about safety or a story they've heard?



Empathise

Reflect their position back to them to show you've heard and understood.



Ask for Permission

Once they feel heard, you can ask, "Would it be okay if I shared with you why I hold a different point of view?" This earns you the right to be heard.

This approach—building trust and connection—is the foundation. And when we combine it with our next strategy, becoming a true practice champion, we create a powerful force for change.



Solution 3: Become Your Practice Champion



Generate Reports

Identify your patients that are overdue for vaccination



Proactive Follow-Up

Reach out with personalised contact



Drive Change

Use your own data to reduce care gaps in your clinic



Every Conversation Matters

Our rates are lagging due to a mix of practical and trust-based barriers

- Six out of every ten parents feel distressed and anxious simply at the thought of vaccinating their child
- 1 in 4 parents couldn't get an appointment when they were due
- About 1 in 5 couldn't afford it



Streamline Workflow

Automate and improve access



Build Trust

Listen respectfully, address concerns with empathy



Lead the Change

Use your data to identify and close gaps proactively

You are the foundation of this work. Every single conversation you have matters. Every vaccination counts.