

Dos and Don'ts

When Communicating about Childhood Vaccines with Spanish Speaking Audiences



Below are framing recommendations for communicating about childhood vaccination with Spanish-speaking audiences in ways that build on existing strengths in public understanding. These recommendations are drawn from FrameWorks Institute research with Spanish-speaking adults across the United States and provide a practical foundation for communications that reinforce vaccine confidence. Each recommendation also includes sample, grab-and-go Spanish-language messaging that illustrates the framing strategy and can be adapted for a variety of communication contexts.

Do...

Lead with community. Frame childhood vaccination as something families do to keep their communities healthy and safe. Connect community benefits to personal benefits (e.g., protecting the community keeps your child and family safe).

Example (Spanish):

“Proteger la salud de la comunidad también significa proteger a nuestras propias familias. Cuando más familias mantienen sus vacunas al día, todos contribuimos a reducir la propagación de enfermedades.”

Keep the tone welcoming and collaborative. This helps make the communication an invitation to cooperate.

Example (Spanish):

“La salud de la comunidad es un trabajo en equipo. Cuando cada uno contribuye, ayudamos a proteger a nuestras familias y a quienes nos rodean.”

Don't...

“Zoom in” on children. “Your child” framing and emphasizing benefits to an individual child can activate concerns about vaccine risks and take attention away from broader community benefits.

Use a tone that communicates a moral obligation or government directive. Doing so can trigger skepticism.



Do...

Frame vaccination as a shared public health effort to boost support for vaccine access and vaccination policies. Explain what public health is, emphasize that healthy communities are like a team, and talk about shared responsibility for making vaccines easy for everyone to access.

Example (Spanish):

“Mantener una comunidad saludable requiere el esfuerzo de todos. Cuando todas las familias tienen acceso fácil a las vacunas, juntos reducimos la propagación de enfermedades y protegemos la salud de toda la comunidad.”

Use historical examples to show how vaccines have reduced disease. Point to familiar vaccines like chickenpox (which works especially well), measles, and polio. Use multiple examples and include factual data about the effectiveness of vaccination efforts.

Example (Spanish):

“La historia demuestra que las vacunas salvan vidas. Gracias a la vacunación, enfermedades como la varicela, el sarampión y la poliomielitis han dejado de afectar a millones de personas. Por ejemplo, los casos de varicela han disminuido en más del 90 %, un ejemplo claro de cómo la vacunación protege a las familias y fortalece la salud de toda la comunidad.”

Don't...

Frame with a child health or child development perspective or rely on the phrase “public health” by itself. Doing so can lead to people thinking about individual risks to their child and may spark resistance.

Spend time explaining how vaccines work. Spanish-speakers have high baseline knowledge of how vaccines work, and metaphorical explanations don't improve understanding.