



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

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Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

From: Kiran A. Ahuja
Director

Subject: COVID-19 Vaccination of Children Ages 5 and Older

On October 29, 2021, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine shot for children ages 5 through 11. Following the FDA's approval, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended on November 2, 2021, that everyone ages 5 years and older should get a COVID-19 vaccination to help protect against COVID-19. This is an expansion of CDC's previous recommendation that children age 12 and older should be vaccinated. This will protect the children and will also slow the spread of COVID-19 across the country.

Earlier this year, based on President Biden's direction that the Federal Government should work aggressively to maximize the number of people receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force issued guidance directing Federal agencies to grant administrative leave so that Federal employees may accompany their children who are getting a COVID-19 vaccine shot. This guidance now applies to employees with children ages 5 through 11, since those children are vaccine-eligible. OPM encourages agencies to make sure employees are aware of this policy through outreach to their workforce.

As a reminder, the following frequently asked question is posted at <https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/leave/>:

Q: Must an agency grant administrative leave to cover the period of time it takes an employee to accompany a family member who is receiving a COVID-19 vaccination?

A: Yes, an agency must grant administrative leave to federal employees who accompany any family member who is receiving a COVID-19 vaccination.

Based on President Biden's direction that the Federal Government should work aggressively to maximize the number of people receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, the Administration has determined that, going forward, agencies must grant administrative leave to federal employees who accompany their family members who are receiving any dose of a COVID-19 vaccination. For this purpose, a "family member" is an individual who meets the definition of that term in OPM's leave regulations (see 5 CFR 630.201).

Under this policy, agencies must grant leave-eligible employees up to four hours of administrative leave per dose—for example, up to a total of twelve hours of leave for a family member receiving three doses—for each family member the employee accompanies. (If an employee needs to spend less time accompanying a family member

who is receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, only the needed amount of administrative leave should be granted.) Employees should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before being permitted to use administrative leave for COVID-19 vaccination purposes. Employees may not be credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent outside their tour of duty helping a family member get vaccinated. This policy applies to covered vaccinations received after posting of this FAQ on July 29, 2021.

As stated above, the above guidance now can be applied to employees with children ages 5 through 11, since those children are vaccine-eligible. An employee may receive administrative leave in connection with the vaccination of a child if that child is a qualifying family member of the employee under 5 CFR 630.201—i.e., the child is (1) a biological, adopted, step or foster child of the employee; (2) a legal ward of the employee; (3) a person for whom the employee stands *in loco parentis*; or (4) a child of the employee's spouse or domestic partner under the terms described in conditions (1)-(3).

We note that administrative leave is granted not only in connection with accompanying family members to obtain a primary vaccine shot but also to obtain a booster shot for those who are eligible to receive one or an additional dose for immunocompromised individuals. However, at this time, COVID-19 vaccine booster shots are not approved for persons under age 18. See guidance on booster shots issued by the Centers for Disease Control at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>.

Additional Information

Agency headquarters-level human resources offices may contact OPM at pay-leave-policy@opm.gov. Component-level human resources offices must contact their agency headquarters for assistance. Because the granting of administrative leave is administered by employing agencies, employees must contact their agency human resources for further information regarding this matter.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers, Deputy CHCOs, Human Resources Directors, and Work-Life Coordinators

Attachment: [November 2, 2021 CDC Media Statement: CDC Recommends Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine for Children 5 to 11 Years](#)