

January 2022

ONcall

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inside

Accreditation in public relations and why it matters

An Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) is a valuable certification that will demonstrate professionalism, high-level skills and credibility. It is a recognized industry credential, and it offers professional development that will help improve your practice. Read more about why it may help you and how to get started earning your APR.

Keep families engaged with an easy-to-use website

It's a good idea to review your website periodically to ensure that it is a functional tool for engaging and updating families about important programs and decisions. Check your navigation, internal links, design responsiveness and accessibility to be sure that it is serving the needs of your users.

What is your professional development plan?

Professional development opportunities are a requirement of most jobs. They are also an important benefit in helping staff grow professionally, which enhances confidence in work skills. Staff should be encouraged to think about what they want and need from additional training and then build a plan to achieve it.

What should you put in your newsletters?

Newsletters are a tried-and-true way to share information. This traditional tool is still a relevant part of a good communications plan that allows targeted, regular, easy-to-access information. Read a list of essential information and ideas to keep them fresh.

Here's to You! Tips for good health

This issue has tips for setting goals for 2022, pandemic precautions during travel and how to find credible sources of COVID-19 guidance.

INSIGHTS FOR PARENTS: Vaccines, boosters and kids

There is a lot of information about COVID-19 and the vaccines for the virus. Many people have strong beliefs and opinions about these issues that are affecting our daily lives and the lives of our children. It's important to remember that kids are listening, and the many concerns they hear may be adding to already high anxiety. Here are tips for helping minimize confusion and concern.

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Accreditation in public relations and why it matters

“As a life-long learner, I chose to pursue Accreditation in Public Relations to complement my communication skills, knowledge and experiences.”

— Leah R. H. Robinson, APR

Do you have trouble getting a seat at the decision-making table? Are you wondering how to advance in the field of public relations? Do you want to gain more leadership opportunities? Then you’re going to want to learn more about obtaining the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR).

What is the APR?

The APR is a way to certify your ethical and highly specialized standards as a public relations (PR) pro. After applying, the APR has two parts: a panel presentation and a computer-based exam.

For both parts of the APR, candidates are tested on a wide array of PR topics that demonstrate knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA). These fall under a series of categories: researching, planning, implementing and evaluating programs; leading the public relations function; managing relationships; applying ethics and law; managing issues and crisis communications; understanding communication models, theories and history of the profession.

For a more detailed description of the KSAs, go to <https://www.prsa.org/docs/default-source/accreditation-site/apr-ksas-tested.pdf>.

For the panel presentation, you will share a case study that demonstrates all of the required KSAs. First, you submit a questionnaire. Next, you present a communications plan to a panel of three current APRs. The purpose of the panel is to help the APR candidate succeed. The panel is there to help guide you and is meant to be a conversational exchange. It is not meant as a way to criticize the candidate.

The APR’s computer-based exam is similar to the bar exam for attorneys. It tests you on a variety of topics that reflect the KSAs. It’s not a memorization-style exam; it’s another way to demonstrate your breadth of expertise. The exam contains 132 scored questions and 33 beta questions. Neither are labeled. The questions are multiple choice, require two or more answers, and must be completely correct to count toward your score.

Both the panel presentation and the exam are rigorous methods to ensure any PR pro has done the groundwork and has an exceptional awareness of the KSAs. This is why having an APR will set you apart from other PR professionals.

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Why is the APR important?

Approximately 4,900 communications pros have obtained an APR, according to the Public Relations Society of America.

“For me, the APR was personal fulfillment and dedication to my personal and professional growth within the industry,” said Leah R. H. Robinson, APR. “Because the circle of accredited public relations professionals is small in relation to the overall profession, my network has increased for the simple fact that many APRs want to meet other APRs, so the introductions have been great.”

Robinson is currently a Content and Public Relations Specialist for LeadCoverage, which is a marketing and PR firm based in Atlanta, Georgia.

The APR enhances competence and showcases expertise, dedication, best industry practices and high standards for professionalism in PR, according to PRSA.

Not only will the APR boost your PR confidence and competence, it will help advance your career. As Robinson stated, you’ll have more opportunities to network with APRs who have experience in diverse PR fields. Additionally, professionals with an APR typically gain opportunities to counsel C-suite-level management. As a result of gaining more responsibility, APRs also earn more money than they did before having the accreditation, according to Bey-Ling Sha, Ph.D., APR, California State University Fullerton, who was quoted in the official APR Study Guide.

“Since obtaining my APR, I’ve changed employers and the value of my experience is monumental. It is always a blessing to be appreciated for my skills, experiences and expertise within the industry, and life in general,” said Robinson.

Who does the APR benefit?

The answer is easy: everyone. Public relations is the bedrock of every organization. Not only will it enhance the career of an APR, it will add to the ethics, values and integrity of any organization they help guide. Internal stakeholders and external clients will also benefit from this level of expertise involved with management.

Rakeem Mosey, APR, said that his experience with earning APR has opened the door for his career. Mosey is currently the communications lead at the Bowen Group, which is a veteran consulting firm based in Stafford, Virginia.

“[Receiving the APR] has given me greater confidence in my work and leadership abilities,” said Mosey. “I also believe that once you go through this process, the things you learn become a part of every aspect of your thinking, planning, and how you execute your work duties. I find myself often asking the very necessary questions that aim to improve and streamline inefficient systems where I work.”

APR Resources

The Universal Accreditation Board administers the APR. There are many resources to help prepare for the panel presentation and exam. For more information, go to: <https://accreditation.prsa.org/MyAPR/Content/Apply/APR/APR.aspx>.

Additionally, many public relations organizations offer information on the APR. You can read

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Get Your APR

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testimonials from APRs on the National School Public Relations website: www.nspr.org/apr-testimonials. If you're an NSPRA member, they offer a \$110 reimbursement for members who pass the APR computer-based exam.

There is also a self-paced online study course that can help you prepare for the APR: <https://online2learn.net/APR>.

“It took me many years to begin the process of earning my APR,” said Mosey. “Like most, I was unsure when I’d find time to prepare and study. Also, hearing about so many people who failed their first attempt was discouraging. The pandemic allowed me time to discreetly prepare, study, and start the process. My advice to those who are interested is to silence your doubt and make a commitment to yourself. It’s so worth it.”

Contributed by Jaime Dunkel, communications consultant

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Keep families engaged with an easy-to-use website

Families are more engaged now than before the pandemic due to the switch to virtual instruction. Digital communications and the wider availability of WiFi and devices made it easier for parent-school communication.

“More than three-quarters of educators said that parent-school communication increased during the pandemic. And more than a third—37 percent—said it increased “a lot,” according to a survey by the EdWeek Research Center.” www.edweek.org/leadership/pandemic-parents-are-more-engaged-how-can-schools-keep-it-going/2021/09

Facebook live videos, daily website updates and email blasts were crucial to getting COVID-related information to families quickly. Your school community has come to rely on your digital communications and especially your website to find out COVID-related information and general school updates. Your website might have barely been accessed pre-pandemic, but now it’s a well-used hub of important information.

Now that schools are approaching the mid-year mark of in-person school, take some time to refresh your website and ensure all families can access information. Follow these recommendations to optimize your website:

Navigation

Your homepage should be simple and guide users to where they want to go fast. Include quick links, rotating images, social media links, news and events. Quick links let users find information faster. List latest events with a link to view the entire calendar and use images to draw attention to important events.

Internal links

Having internal links connecting your pages so that the content is easy to find and easy to consume is a best practice. If you have a page that is not being linked to from any other page, consider adding some links or removing it. If you publish a blog or newsletter, it should also include hyperlinks to other relevant pages on the school’s website. This will help your SEO and improve the user experience because users will be able to find relevant content faster. <https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/seo-for-schools>

Responsive design

Many families access your website solely on smartphones. According to the Pew Research

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Center, reliance on smartphones for online access is especially common among younger adults, lower-income Americans and those with a high school education or less. www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/

Google offers a mobile-friendly testing tool (<https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>) that can be used on a page-by-page basis so you can determine which sections of your website are fully optimized, and which could use some improvements.

Website accessibility requirements

The pandemic revealed the importance of website accessibility. Remote learning and zoom meetings made it easier for some people with disabilities to engage and participate in school activities. People should be able to count on the same easy access to content on your website. Website accessibility standards include requirements for alt text on photos, subtitles and transcripts with videos, and a design with required structural and navigational elements.

A quick way to check your web accessibility is to use the Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (WAVE). You can simply enter your web page address (URL) for a report or use a WAVE browser extension to test accessibility directly within your web browser. <https://wave.webaim.org/>

Consider involving your community in the process. Ask students and/or families with disabilities (sight, hearing and cognition) to “test” your website. Use community feedback to make necessary changes and ensure your website and other digital content are easy to use for everyone.

School website example

Dayton Public Schools in Ohio recently won an award of excellence from NSPRA. Their website is visually appealing, easy to navigate and updated regularly. Their website layout design includes these useful features:

- A pop-up window with links to latest news, calendar and bell schedule, COVID-19 metrics and crisis line contact information
- Urgent news in a scrolling banner below navigation
- A “slider” of most frequently requested features
- “Popular” section of linked images to student enrollment, employee log-in, school board meetings, staff directory, COVID-19 metrics, etc.

www.dps.k12.oh.us

See NSPRA’s digital media award winners for more ideas: www.nspira.org/publications-digital-media-award-winners-2021#Internet_Intranet_Website

Contributed by Erin Good, communications consultant

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What is your professional development plan?

Professional development is essential. Call it onboarding, training, or required professional learning, it not only helps employers get the best contributions from staff members, but it can build confidence in employees who expand their skills. Ideally, it is ongoing.

The work environment is constantly changing, especially in the uncertain times of the COVID era. Learning new skills and learning how to learn is a benefit for workers and managers alike. In schools, it allows staff to model learning for a lifetime to their students.

Professional learning is self-care

The pandemic has created feelings of anxiety and insecurity in many people. Many educators, in particular, have reported feeling this stress at high levels. Self-care is the recommended antidote to pandemic-related mental health concerns. But what does that mean?

Self-care can mean learning to say no and preserving personal time and boundaries. It can be focusing on physical health by eating well, exercising more and sleeping better. It could include a massage or dedicated social time with family and friends.

It could also mean reducing or eliminating worries about job skills and work stability by increasing tangible, high-demand skills to ensure that you are indispensable in your current job or sought after for your next prospects.

The best training for you

To maintain certification, licensed staff must earn professional development units (PDUs). Staff may have prescribed training activities or choose to pursue specialized training to enhance or expand their skillset. The first step is to understand the goal of the training you seek. Do you need specific training, or do you want to explore a learning area? District managers, HR or school principals may have recommendations. Local or state professional networks may also offer opportunities to build skills while expanding professional networks.

Professional learning as self-care

The Professional Learning Association suggests that professional learning is self-care. In the midst of the stress and uncertainty of the current era, finding meaning and satisfaction in our work is a means of self-care, and one way to do this is to focus on professional learning to master an area of interest.

To do this, three conditions must be met. According to learning coach and Superintendent Stacy Winslow, they are:

- **Mastery** – You must have the desire to master the activity. We all want to be the very

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best educators we can possibly be, so working towards mastery is a condition that is easily met as we learn, practice, and aim to master new content or strategies.

- **Mindfulness** – You need to be mindful of your time, giving yourself space and opportunity to engage in the activity. When you really engage in professional learning, you have to set aside time to truly engage – you have to turn off email, limit distractions, and turn yourself over to the learning experience.
- **Mattering**— The activity you are engaging in needs to truly matter to you and to others. There is no question that this work matters. In fact, it matters now more than ever before because the students need us, and we need each other so much.

<https://learningforward.org/2021/11/23/professional-learning-is-self-care/>

Upskilling for mid-career workers

Workers and employers benefit from low staff turnover. The upfront investment of hiring someone is substantial. After the initial onboarding, it makes financial sense to protect your investment in staff by helping them maintain or improve their skills. Also, high turnover among staff can damage employee morale and raise concerns about workplace culture.

Workers should be able to access high-quality training to keep updated on current changes to the workplace, their industry and COVID-related shifts in workplace philosophy and practices.

AARP makes a case for leveraging the vast experience and soft skills of mid-career workers: “The business case for upskilling and reskilling your existing workforce across the age spectrum has never been stronger. The ripple effect in closing your organization’s skills gap empowers your workforce, ensures business continuity, saves your organization on capital costs and meets the evolving needs of your customers. Communicating reskilling and upskilling opportunities to your existing employees with respect, collaboration and transparency will help pave the way for success.”

The emphasis is on sensitivity to ensure that workers feel respected. It is not a matter of age but on a recognition of the experience in the field or position and the need to consider new focus areas or gaps that could help them grow in their job or mentor new hires.

<https://bit.ly/31sSQOb>

Creating a learning plan

After you define your professional development goals, you must spend some time developing a plan for success. As the saying goes, goals without plans are just wishes.

Employers may also require a written plan or reflection as a pre-evaluation tool, especially if the goals are attached to funding requests for conferences, materials or training.

Duke University has a performance management section on their website that is for managers. These resources may be helpful self-reflection tools: “A professional development plan documents the goals, required skill and competency development, and objectives a staff member will need to accomplish in order to support continuous improvement and career development. A professional development plan is created by the manager working closely with the staff member to identify the necessary skills and resources to support the staff member’s career goals and the organization’s business needs.” <https://hr.duke.edu/managers/performance-management/professional-development-plan>

As long as the plan and the process are not overly intimidating, the process may be a helpful

way for employer and employee to understand and clarify the needs and understanding of the work. Excellent communication skills could help avoid any misunderstanding.

Suggested professional development activities

When we think of professional development, we may imagine reading books, completing online modules or attending workshops or conferences. Opportunities for career development and continuous improvement are much more expansive than that. In addition to learning hard skills and current trends, employees can gain leadership experience through in-house job transfer or shadowing stints.

The following suggested activities are part of the Duke planning process:

- Expand accountabilities through meaningful leadership and risk-taking opportunities.
- Attend department meetings, agree to assignments as needed.
- Seek job coaching and mentorship from a supervisor, including availability for questions and thought-partnering to solve problems.
- Agree to formal presentation opportunities.
- Participate in job shadowing by a supervisor to prepare to assume leadership responsibilities.
- Take a lateral transfer to broaden knowledge.
- Consider enrolling in a college course for specific skills.
- Become involved in community or civic organizations.

<https://hr.duke.edu/managers/performance-management/professional-development-plan/development-suggestions>

Contributed by Marcia Latta, communications consultant

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What should you put in your newsletters?

Newsletters traditionally have played an important role in helping schools communicate with parents. But are newsletters still relevant when schools have so many other communication tools at their disposal?

The answer is a resounding yes!

Newsletters are an essential tool in keeping parents informed about their school — upcoming events, information about field trips, school championships, clubs, new programs and more. They help keep parents engaged in what’s going on and also build positive relationships.

Unlike websites, where parents have to go looking for information that is often on different pages, newsletters deliver the news in one concise package, right to the parents’ inbox.

The printed newsletters of years past have given way to electronic versions that are easier and quicker to produce. But they still fill the same role, delivering useful information on a regular schedule, so parents can count on them as a consistent source of information.

Electronic newsletters can be as simple or as elaborate as you have the time and staff to produce. Some schools create a newsletter that is essentially an email with a bulleted list of items. Others use free or paid templates to create more visual appeal. The most important point is that the newsletter is useful, relevant and timely.

Whatever design is used, it’s important that the format works well on mobile devices. Smartphones have turned into the main device that parents use to check email. In 2021, about 85 percent of U.S. adults own a smartphone, according to the Pew Research Institute, and the rate rises to 95 percent for those ages 30-49. The rate remains high across all income levels. For about one-fourth of Americans earning less than \$30,000 per year, their smartphone is their only access to the internet.

Some schools produce weekly newsletters; others do it monthly. Sometimes schools hesitate to send a weekly newsletter because they don’t always have a lot to share. But shorter newsletters aren’t a bad thing. Readers are far more likely to read a one- or two-minute long email each week than a 10-minute read once a month. Commit to a regular schedule where the newsletter is sent on the same day each week, so parents know when to expect it. When parents know when to expect your content, they will look for it.

So what type of information should you include?

1. **Upcoming events.** Nothing is more irritating to a parent than to find out after the fact about an event that they might have wanted to attend, such as a field trip or school play or musical. Let them know the details of upcoming events, including time and place and where to buy tickets (if needed).

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2. **News about important changes.** Are you adding a new program? Or eliminating an after-school activity? Is the school moving to a new bell schedule? These are things parents care deeply about and want to know about before they happen. Don't wait until the changes are implemented to let parents know.
3. **Ask their opinion.** Find out how your parents feel about different issues by including an occasional survey in your newsletter. You can create the survey in Google or another platform and include the link in your newsletter. Not only is it a way to learn important information, but it also makes your parents feel like they have a voice in the decisions that affect their school and their children.
4. **Kudos and celebrations.** Share your good news! Let parents know when a student or staff member wins an award. Share the link when the school or student or staff member are featured in a newspaper article. Parents love knowing that good things are happening in their school, and it gives them a sense of pride.
5. **Staff profiles.** Profile a different staff member in every issue by writing a short article about them. Include information such as how long they've been at the school, where they attended college and what they like about working at your school. If they're open to it, include information about their families and their hobbies. These profiles are a way to recognize staff and also let parents learn more about the people working with their children every day. Be sure to include all staff, including teachers, secretaries, custodians and cooks.
6. **Short articles about classroom activities.** Share news about the interesting ways students are learning. Include short articles about the fifth grade's maker fair and the reading competition that the third grade class is doing. Publish a copy of a cute poem that a fourth grader wrote.
7. **Share information about school projects.** Let parents know if students are collecting canned goods for the local food pantry or plan to honor veterans at a school assembly for Veterans Day. Even if parents aren't directly involved, they like to hear about the positive contributions their students are making.
8. **Trivia questions.** It can be fun and engaging to include trivia questions in each issue. The questions could range from the origin of the school mascot to what year the school was built. By including the questions at the end of the newsletter, you encourage readers to read to the very end.
9. **Student artwork.** Parents enjoy seeing student art creations, so consider featuring a student drawing or other piece of art in each issue. It gives recognition to the student and is enjoyable for parents.

Every school has a different personality and culture, so every school newsletter will have a different look and feel. What's most important is that the content is useful, relevant and easy to read. School newsletters are an essential link to parents and a way to provide valuable insight into what is happening in your school.

Here's to You!

Tips for your good health provided by your district

January 2022

2022 goals: Be happier and healthier



It turned out that 2021 was not the year we reclaimed normalcy from the pandemic disruptions. The only certain thing, it seems, is the uncertainty of the current times.

A positive outcome, however, is that we have a better understanding of our own rights and responsibilities in how we feel. While we may not be able to change circumstances, we have control over our attitudes about the circumstances – and our actions based on those attitudes. At the risk of overgeneralizing, it is helpful to understand that the way we feel, our mood, affects our health and vice versa.

According to Harvard health experts,

people who self-describe as happy have fewer health issues, lower rates of depression and longer lives. And, they say, we can learn to be happier.

There may be limits to how happy we can train ourselves to be. Researchers believe we have genetic levels of happiness. But, they believe, we can make changes to increase happiness up to a point. Here are their top tips for being your most happy self:

- Smile: Facial expressions affect our moods.
- Connect with family and friends.
- Volunteer, especially if you are over 70.
- Be kind. Pick a day and plan ahead to treat others with kindness.
- Pick up old hobbies and pastimes from youth.
- Spend money on time-saving services, such as housecleaning.

“
It turns out that most people can increase their happiness. Research suggests that, on average, 50% of people's general level of happiness is determined by genetics. However, 40% is under people's control, and the remaining 10% depends on the circumstances.

”
—Harvard Medical School

- Buy experiences rather than things.
- Build a network of other happy people.
- Spend more time in green spaces.
- Vary your routines. Small changes to daily habits, such as new workouts, a new route to the store or a new podcast, can be stimulating.
- Practice gratitude. Reflect on and write down things you are grateful for.
- Reduce your options when making decisions. Fewer choices, or a limit on the amount of time for decision-making can reduce regret.

<https://bit.ly/3llwajR>

Here's to You! is published for school district staff members in the interest of your good health. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Here's to You! is written and published by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

Graphics from *The Noun Project*, www.thenounproject.com.

Ready to travel again?



If your wanderlust was put on hold, and you are thinking about getaway plans for travel in the new year, you need the latest information on how, where and when to travel.

COVID-19 travel restrictions have been continually changing, which may be the new normal for the foreseeable future.

The best strategy is to do your research, plan ahead, and build in flexibility. And, get an app or two to help you track the requirements.

Here are a few, recommended by SmarterTravel.com:

- **Tripit:** free for basic plan. Tripit Pro is \$49 per year and offers expanded tools. This app is an all-in-one organizer. It keeps your mobile itinerary, important travel documents and the latest COVID travel guidance, including COVID information about your destination, in one place.
- **Omio:** Tracks COVID news for your trip, including restrictions, partial openings and fully opened locales. It is a helpful planning tool and offers information about

cancellation policies for your reservations.

- **Airsiders Compass:** a tool to learn about safety measures and restrictions for airports and airlines. Information is updated daily, and tips for staying safe are included.
- **Check&Fly:** Created by the Airports Council International and only available for IOS systems for Apple devices, this app compiles health and safety information from airports to help you stay informed before arriving at the airport. Airports also use it to communicate directly with passengers to inform them of last-minute changes.
- **App in the Air:** Available on IOS or Android systems, this app is billed as an all-in-one tool. Travelers can check health and safety measures for their flights, get notifications about flight changes and learn about pandemic regulations at travel destinations.

www.smartertravel.com/apps-for-covid-travel

Find credible COVID-19 guidance

Vaccines and boosters are a hot-button issue in some communities. There is a lot of information that may be adding to the confusion and fueling differences of opinion.

To ensure that state and employer restrictions don't have an adverse impact on your activities, get reliable facts and verify credibility by checking reputable sites.

These sites were top search engine results in a Google search of vaccine facts and reliable COVID information. Of note, top hospitals around the country all have similar pages, and most people consider doctors a credible source of information.

Global Citizen: Nine Reliable Resources for Information about Coronavirus

<https://bit.ly/3Dp12w4>

CDC: Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines

<https://bit.ly/31xqr9Y>

Mayo Clinic: Get the Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines

<https://mayoclinic.org/3dnKD0m>

American Hospital Association: COVID19-Vaccine Communication Resources

www.aha.org/vaccineconfidence

Ad Council: COVID Collaborative

<https://getvaccineanswers.org>



Vaccines, Boosters and Kids



**January
2022**

INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

Vaccines have dominated news stories, divided families and communities, and impacted our daily lives by allowing the opening up of schools, work and businesses or affecting employment due to mandates and requirements.

The impact on our lives because of COVID vaccines is immense. Public health officials say they are the basis for returning to normal daily life. Governments at the local, state and federal levels are using vaccine rates as a measure of health and safety.

Many people eagerly lined up for vaccines and are now getting in line for boosters.

Conversely, other people are concerned about the safety of the vaccines. They are as anxious about the vaccines as the pro-vaccine camp is eager to get in line for a shot.

Kids are listening

Regardless of adult feelings and beliefs about vaccines, it is important to recognize how kids feel. In some ways, they are caught in the middle of the requirements for attending school and activities and their parents' belief systems. This can be confusing.

Children and teens may be having the same conversations about conflicting vaccine views that their parents are having, and they may be feeling additional stress as these views affect their friendships or limit their access to activities.

They may also be concerned about getting the virus or spreading it to peers and family members.

According to Dr. Arwa Nasir, professor of pediatrics at University of Nebraska Medical Center and member of the American Academy of Pediatrics:

"The numbers are trickling in now that [show] the COVID pandemic has really resulted in significant psychosocial stressors on children and families. We have numbers now to indicate an increase in the number of emergency room visits for mental health issues and suicide attempts. We knew that the stressors associated with the pandemic, all the way from the illness itself, the death of family members, the quarantine, the interruption of school ... we knew that this is not going to be good."

<https://bit.ly/3r3O6t9>

Infection rates are rising among children and teens

In November, vaccines were approved for children as young as five. Young people are at the same risk for infection as adults, according to the CDC. In September, the CDC reported a 240% increase in kids since early July. <https://bit.ly/30TsRPv>

As they returned to school, and the highly transmissible Delta variant has circulated, infection rates and hospitalizations have spiked, and young people face the same risks as adults. Many have been hospitalized or face ongoing post-infection symptoms.

Information for parents

Parents try to make the best decisions for their kids. This is not an easy task during this challenging time where so many different viewpoints are circulating.

Here are some resources that provide additional information about vaccines for kids to help parents make informed decisions about their child's health.

COVID-19 Vaccines for Kids: A Parent's Guide

www.everydayhealth.com/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines-for-kids-a-parents-guide

This list of eight things parents need to know may help clarify vaccine confusion:

- 1. The vaccine has been tested extensively in both children and adults.** The vaccine was in use by adults for about a year. Hundreds of millions of shots had been administered before testing a lower dose on younger ages.
- 2. Common side effects are similar for kids and adults.** Symptoms include pain at the injection site, tiredness, headaches and occasional fever. No serious adverse effects were found. Myocarditis, a very rare side effect, has been found in 1 in 26,000 young men.
- 3. Younger children get a smaller dose.** Doses are about one-third of the adult dose.
- 4. COVID-19 sickens more children than many realize.** Children are infected at higher rates than thought, and the effects can be long-lasting.
- 5. COVID-19 has impacted children's mental health.** Mental health issues are affecting kids because of disrupted activities, loss of loved ones and fear of infection.
- 6. Many pediatrician's offices will offer COVID-19 vaccines.** Kids will likely be able to get vaccinated at their current pediatrician's office.
- 7. Younger babies and toddlers could get approval soon.** Tests are currently underway for this youngest group. It's not clear if infants will ever be approved.
- 8. Immunizing children could provide a path out of the pandemic.** The CDC urges vaccines to protect recipients and reduce infectiousness for those around them.

Resources

CDC: COVID-19 Vaccination for Children 5-11 Years Old

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/planning/children.html

CDC: COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/children-teens.html

CDC: COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>