



# Parent Focus Group Discussion Guide

## Introduction and Ice Breaker (12 min.)

**MODERATOR NOTE: Must-hit questions are in bold and should be prioritized if time is limited. Specific notes for moderators are in brackets and are highlighted.**

### Introduction

Hello and thank you for speaking with me today. My name is X, and I work for a private research company.

Before we begin, I want to go over a couple of things:

- Your participation is voluntary. If I ask any questions that you do not wish to answer, you do not have to answer them. Also, there are no right or wrong answers here—we just want to know what you think.
- I did not create any of the materials you'll be reviewing, so I invite you to openly share your thoughts and opinions with me. Your responses won't affect me either way. Again, my whole reason for being here is to learn about what you think, not to try to sway you.
- There may be times I ask you to clarify or ask you to tell me more about what you just said. This is simply to make sure I understand and accurately capture what you think, not because I'm challenging your point of view.
- Everything you share here is confidential. Nothing you say will be tied back to you. Your name and any identifying information will not be used in any of our reports.
- There are some other people on the call who are helping me take notes so that I can focus on our conversation.
- I'll be recording our conversation. The recordings will be used to confirm our notes, and other project staff may hear the recording at a later date.
  - o **[Moderator Asks. Receives verbal yes] Do you agree to be recorded?**
  - o Great! I am going to start the recording now.
- Our discussion should take no more than 2 hours. I want to be respectful of your time so I may interrupt to make sure we can stay on track and get through all of the questions I have today.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

### Ice Breaker

Great! I'd like to start by getting to know each other a bit more. I can get us started.

**[Moderator introduces self. If you don't have a child, but have experiences with children from your family, friends, etc., please use that as your icebreaker and mention what you**



enjoy doing with them. If you don't have a child or any experiences with them, feel free to give a fun fact or something you enjoy doing in your free time]

I have a list of participants, so I'll call on each of you and have you tell me:

- **How many children do you have and what are their ages?** [Please use this to confirm that they have at least one child who is 6 months to under 5 years old]
  - o **What's something you enjoy doing with your child or children?**  
[Probe as needed to establish rapport]

[Please keep this in mind throughout, you may need to remind participants.] For our discussion today, I'd like you to specifically think of your child who is 6 months to under 5 years old when answering questions. For those who have multiple children under 5, please think about the child who is under 5 and whose birthday is next. This would have been the child you thought of to answer questions when screened for this focus group.

## COVID-19 Context, Attitudes, and Behaviors (15 min.)

Now I'm going to ask you about some of your experiences with COVID-19.

- **In what ways has the pandemic affected you and your child's lives?**
  - o [If not mentioned above] **What does your current childcare situation look like?**
- What aspects of having a young child during the pandemic are most challenging for you?
  - o [PARENTS WITH CHILD 5 OR OLDER] For those who also have an older child, how are those challenges similar or different to challenges you've faced with your older child?
- **Where do you learn information about children and COVID-19?**
- **What have you heard or read about the health effects of COVID-19 in children?**
  - o **What kinds of health effects have you heard about?**
    - **Where did you hear about these effects?**
    - **How trustworthy do you believe this source to be?**
      - **How come?**
  - o **How did you feel when you heard about these health effects?**
- Have you or anyone you know personally ever been diagnosed with, or suspected you had, COVID-19?
  - o [IF YES] Probe on who they know (e.g., self, family member, friend) AND what was their experience?
    - [IF CHILD HAD COVID] How have your concerns about COVID-19 changed since your child had it, if at all?
    - [IF CHILD HAS NOT HAD IT] How concerned are you about the possibility of your young child contracting COVID-19?

## Vaccination Intent (30 min.)

Next, I'm going to ask you about your thoughts and feelings regarding COVID-19 vaccines.

- What have you heard about COVID-19 vaccines for young children, under the age of 5?
  - Where have you heard this?
    - How trustworthy do you believe this source to be?
      - How come?
      - [Probe on how they determined this source is or is not trustworthy]
- Who do you trust most to provide you with accurate information about COVID-19 and vaccines for young children?
  - What makes you trust them?
  - [If participants mention trusting their doctor, physician, pediatrician, etc., probe about why that is, how long they've been seeing that medical professional, etc.]
    - [If they don't have a health care professional they regularly see] What would you do to get this information? Who would you go to?
- Have you had conversations with a pediatrician or other health care professional about COVID-19 vaccines for young children?
  - [IF YES] How did that conversation go?
    - What questions did you have?
    - What did they say about the COVID vaccine?
- What information would you want to hear from health care professionals about COVID-19 vaccines for young children?
  - Which health care professional would you want to hear this from?
  - If your [insert health care professional they mention above] explicitly recommended getting your child vaccinated, would you?
    - [If vaccination is recommended, probe about when they would get their child vaccinated after getting the recommendation]
- How closely are you following the news about vaccines for this age group?
  - What have you heard about the vaccine authorization for this age group?
    - How do you feel about what you've heard about the vaccine authorization for this age group?
    - What information would you like to have about the vaccine authorization? [Probe to get as specific as possible]
      - Who would you want this information to come from?
- Do you think a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would reduce your child's risk of getting the disease?
  - [Probe on why or why not]

- What are some of the things that you're thinking about when deciding whether to vaccinate your young child?
- **What concerns do you have about your young child getting a COVID-19 vaccine, once it is available?**
  - o How do your concerns for getting your young child vaccinated differ from your concerns about getting yourself a vaccine?
    - Do those concerns differ from your concerns about other childhood vaccines?
  - o [PARENTS WITH CHILD 5 OR OLDER] How do your concerns about your young child differ from your concerns about your older child?
- **What would encourage or motivate you to get your child vaccinated?**
  - o [PARENTS WHO ARE WAITING TO VACCINATE] What are some reasons for why you will wait to get your young child a COVID-19 vaccine, once they are authorized?
    - How long do you plan to wait to get your young child a vaccine?
      - [Probe around whether they would be waiting for a certain amount of time, certain milestone or event, etc.]
- **What data, statistics, or information do you want to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for children under 5?**
  - o What exact [insert what they said] would you want to know?
  - o How come you would want to know that?
  - o Where would you want to get that information from?
    - Who would you want to hear it from?
  - o How would knowing [insert what they said] encourage you to get your young child vaccinated?
    - How much data would you need to see?
  - o [If they mention "data about long-term effects" please ask:]
    - What length of time would data need to be available for?

## Stimuli Testing (45 min., 15 min. per concept)

Next, I am going to share some initial message ideas. I'm going to ask for your feedback for each idea to determine which one you feel would be the best starting point for creating messages that might appear in ads or other materials about a COVID-19 vaccine when it is authorized and becomes available to children under 5.

Please keep in mind that the ideas I'm going to show you today are not fully developed. As we discuss each of these, I'd like you to imagine that the COVID vaccine is authorized and available to your child.

[Screen share PowerPoint. There are three concepts, ask the following questions for each one.]

[Moderators, please probe as much as possible to ensure we are getting clear and detailed insights for each concept. Please probe around any specific pieces of a concept that may come up. For example, if they mention words or phrases that they

don't like in a concept or if there's a word or phrase that really stands out to them, probe around the reason ("the why") and changes they would make.]

- **What is your initial reaction to this?**
  - o [Probe on what they like or don't like about this idea]
- **What is this idea trying to convey?**
  - o What makes you say that?
- **Does the imagery match what the idea is trying to convey?**
  - o [If not] What images would convey the main idea?
  - o What about the tagline?
    - [Probe on how they may change the tagline]
- **Who do you think this idea is trying to reach?**
  - o Do you feel this idea is relatable?
    - What is it specifically about this idea makes you feel that way?
- **Do you believe this idea?**
  - o [Probe on why it is or isn't believable]
- **On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not convincing and 5 being very convincing, how convincing is this idea as a reason to get your child a COVID-19 vaccine once it is available? [MODERATOR ASKS EACH PARTICIPANT TO GIVE RATING BY INDICATING THE NUMBER WITH THEIR HAND AND MODERATOR READS THIS OUT]**
  - o What about it is convincing?
    - What about it is not convincing?
- **What changes, if any, would you make to the ad idea?**
  - o [If they have specific changes, probe around this. Probe around how those changes would make this a better idea. Would those changes make this idea more believable, convincing?]
  - o [Probe around looking for more information, data, stats, etc. Also probe around who they may talk to after seeing this idea]

## Concept Comparison (5 min.)

I'd like you to think about all of the ideas we have discussed today.

- Tell me about which idea stood out the most to you.
  - o What made it stand out?
  - o Is that good, bad, or some combination?
- **Which idea resonated the most with you?**
  - o Which is the most intriguing?
  - o Which would drive you to look for more information?
- **Which idea would make you the most likely to get your child a COVID-19 vaccine?**

- o [If an idea would encourage vaccination, ask the participant to explain why]
- o [If none of the ideas would encourage vaccination, ask the participant to explain why not]

## Whiteboard Activity (10 min.)

For this last part of our conversation, I'm going to ask all of you to think a bit more creatively. I want you to imagine that you have the opportunity to create messages about the COVID-19 vaccine for children. For this activity, I want you to imagine that the COVID vaccine is authorized and available for children under 5. These messages may appear in ads or other materials.

[Moderator will write down participants' responses on a blank PowerPoint slide]

- **To start us off with this, what words, statements, or general ideas would you want to see in a message that would make you likely to vaccinate your child?**
  - o [Moderators, when a participant gives you a response, please make sure you're clarifying if they're giving a statement or an idea]
  - o [Probe around why]
- **Next, talk to me about what words, statements, or general ideas you don't want to see in a message because it would make you less likely to vaccinate your child.**
  - o [Moderators, when a participant responds, please make sure you're clarifying if they're giving a statement or an idea]
  - o [Probe around why]

## Wrap-Up (3 min.)

- Those are all the questions I have for you. I just want to check to see if any of my colleagues have any final questions.
- Is there anything you would like to share that you have not had the chance to before we wrap up?
- I appreciate you sharing your views about COVID-19 and vaccines. As you know, there are a lot of myths and misinformation around this topic being shared. We would encourage you to go to **[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)** for the latest scientific evidence regarding COVID-19 vaccines. And we have created an FAQ that will be emailed to you following this interview.
- Thank you very much for participating in this discussion. I appreciate your time, and your feedback has been extremely helpful, as it will help the country to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic more effectively.