



New Jersey, the first state in the nation to require flu shots for young schoolchildren, set a Dec. 31 deadline for parents to obtain flu vaccinations for their children. It was part of a new policy requiring a total of four additional immunizations for schoolchildren over the objections of some parents who worry about possible risks from vaccinations.

The requirement applies to children between 6 months and 5 years who are attending licensed day care and preschool programs. State public health experts said that flu shots for young children are important for overall public health.

This fall, the New Jersey Coalition for Vaccination Choice held a rally in Trenton that drew hundreds of parents who said they should be the ones to decide if their children need flu shots, not the state.

"There's a huge trust gap between parents and public health officials right now," said Louise Kuo Habakus, who is a parent and spokeswoman for the New Jersey Coalition for Vaccination Choice. "These are our kids. We're stakeholders. You have to give us a say in this debate."

Many of these parents say they believe vaccines cause autism, even though multiple studies have found no such link.

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