



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Families Fighting Flu and CDC Encourage Parents to Vaccinate Kids Against Flu**

*December 9<sup>th</sup> Declared Second Annual Children's Flu Vaccination Day  
to Help Increase Vaccination Rates and Reduce Flu-Related Illnesses and Deaths*

**Washington, DC, December 9, 2008** – Families Fighting Flu, Inc. (FFF), together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are designating today, December 9, the second annual Children's Flu Vaccination Day to remind parents that it's not too late to get their children vaccinated against influenza, or "the flu." The day highlights the critical need for all children aged six months through 18 years to get vaccinated against the flu. According to the CDC, vaccination is the single best means of protecting children from the flu and preventing the spread of influenza, which can lead to hospitalization and even death. Children's Flu Vaccination Day occurs during the CDC's annual National Influenza Vaccination Week (December 8-14, 2008).

"There is a misconception that after Thanksgiving it's too late to get children vaccinated against the flu. That is one of the reasons why we have designated today as Children's Flu Vaccination Day – to remind parents that it's not too late to get their children vaccinated. In fact, flu activity typically does not reach its peak until January or February, and it can occur as late as May," said Anne Schuchat, M.D. Assistant Surgeon General and Director, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the CDC.

Children die every year in the United States from influenza and its complications. In fact, over the past five flu seasons more than 400 children have died from influenza, and more than 20,000 children under the age of five are hospitalized due to influenza each year. Only 22 percent of children six to 23 months of age were fully vaccinated against influenza during the 2007-2008 flu season, even though the CDC recommends that all of these children get vaccinated every year.

But, it's not just kids who need to get immunized. Parents should also get vaccinated against the flu to better protect their family and loved ones from spreading the disease. A new national FFF survey of mothers of children in child care revealed that 56 percent of mothers said they have not received an influenza vaccination for themselves within the past two years.

"We know that come December many parents, unfortunately, think that flu season has already passed. But the reality is it hasn't even started in some areas of the country and is just starting in others. Our hope

is that by designating today as Children's Flu Vaccination Day we will help remind parents that their children are still susceptible to getting the flu, and that the best way to help protect their family is to get themselves and their children vaccinated as soon as possible," said Julie Moise, FFF board member. Moise's 6½-month-old son, Ian, died suddenly in December 2003 from influenza.

FFF has created a new e-card that's available at [www.familiesfightingflu.org](http://www.familiesfightingflu.org) designed to be distributed starting today and throughout the rest of flu vaccination season (March 2009) to parents to remind them to get their children vaccinated against the flu. Contact your healthcare provider or local health department to find out when and where to get a flu vaccine.

### **Who Should Get Vaccinated?**

The CDC recommends that *all children aged six months through 18 years get vaccinated against the flu every year*, as well as all persons who want to reduce the risk of becoming ill with the flu or transmitting it to others. This includes (but is not limited to): children with certain medical conditions; household contacts (parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) and caregivers of children less than five years old; and, household contacts of other high-risk individuals.

### **About Families Fighting Flu, Inc.**

Families Fighting Flu is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization established in 2004 that is made up of families and healthcare practitioners. Each family has experienced first-hand the death of a child due to the flu or has had a child experience severe medical complications from the flu. We are dedicated to educating people about the severity of influenza and the importance of vaccinating children against the flu every year. Through education and advocacy, we hope to improve the rates of childhood flu vaccinations and help reduce the number of childhood illnesses and deaths caused by the flu each year. For more information, visit [www.familiesfightingflu.org](http://www.familiesfightingflu.org) or call 1-888-2ENDFLU.

To learn more about the seriousness of influenza in children, please watch the video, Why Flu Vaccination Matters, made in partnership with the CDC at <http://www.youtube.com/cdcflu>. For more information about the flu, please visit [www.familiesfightingflu.org](http://www.familiesfightingflu.org), or [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

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