# **Parental Guidance**: **As we await the vaccine for kids, power them with resilience & hope**

**Source: GeetikaSasan Bhandari, Parenting Desk, The Indian Express**

## As we wrap up this year, we’ve just had another Covid positive case in our family, and in both the children’s schools, but my kids, who were as exposed as anyone else, did not get it. In fact, neither did anyone else in our home.We’ve had enough years of them thinking the world is a horrible, bad place and it’s really up to us to show them that amidst all the fear and gloom, there is hope.

The reason I’m saying this is because in the past few months, whether it’s reopening of schools, or letting kids get back to some semblance of normalcy, everyone seems to be on the fence, pinning their hopes on the vaccine for children and putting their lives on hold till their kids are vaccinated.

The official status on that, according to the WHO is that “COVAXIN”, an adjuvant inactivated vaccine developed by Bharat, was approved in India for the age indication of 12-17 years; but not yet received WHO EUL for this age indication. The Indian regulatory authorities have given approval to ZycovD, a novel DNA vaccine, for ages 12-17 years; however, this vaccine has not yet received WHO EUL.” EUL stands for Emergency Use Listing.

Several experts warn that children do not actually need the vaccine. The mortality rate from Covid for children (though India has not released any data from both the waves) is fairly low (two children per 10 lakh according to global estimates). Kids are far more susceptible to other diseases such as influenza/flu compared to Covid, and their bodies have a fairly well-developed immune system to combat the virus.

At the moment, US, Canada and several European countries have already started or are in the middle of robust vaccination cycles for children, but India – with the largest adolescent population in the world – is likely to start once the adult vaccination drive is over. Given that India has carried out the world’s largest vaccination drive – latest figures are 131.18 crore doses administered – parents need not worry. Children are likely to get vaccinated pretty quickly.

As we step into 2022, [Omicron](https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/covid-variant-south-africa-explained-7642199/) notwithstanding, the one thing we should leave behind with 2021 is fear. Children are not highly susceptible, their natural immunity is strong, and even if they do get Covid, it will be like a regular virus that we are all used to. For my family member who recently got it, had we not got it tested, believe me we wouldn’t have known. The symptoms were just like a regular change-of-weather viral. But it’s important to stay safe, and be responsible by getting tested so you don’t infect anyone unknowingly.

The vaccine will be available soon enough, so power your children with strength, resilience and hope. We’ve had enough years of them thinking the world is a horrible, bad place and it’s really up to us to show them that amidst all the fear and gloom, there is hope, there is cure, there is healing, and there is always faith. As I always say, children look up to us for cues on how to model their behaviour and attitudes so it’s high time we shed our insecurities and approach the new year with enthusiasm and hope. Of course, be sensible and safe, but don’t be afraid. Wishing all of us a very Happy New Year and a fabulous 2022, the year of hope. See you on the other side!