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Statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics to “Dateline”

The immunization schedule is considered the ideal schedule for healthy children. It is designed to stimulate children’s immune systems so they will not suffer illness, disability and death from vaccine-preventable diseases. The recommended immunization schedule is based on the latest scientific research. There is no scientific evidence to support the safety or effectiveness of alternative schedules. Delaying vaccines leaves babies unprotected when they are most vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases such as hepatitis B (a liver infection), rotavirus (severe diarrheal disease), whooping cough and bacterial meningitis.

Autism is a devastating, poorly understood neurodevelopmental condition. It is upsetting for families not to know what caused their child’s autism. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) supports additional research to investigate genetic and environmental factors that may affect the developing brain. While it is likely that there are many environmental factors that influence the development of autism, vaccines are not the cause of autism. We know this because many careful and repeated studies show no link between vaccines and autism. Specifically, numerous studies have refuted Andrew Wakefield’s theory that MMR vaccine is linked to bowel disorders and autism. Every aspect of Dr. Wakefield’s theory has been disproven.

The AAP wants parents to have complete, science-based information so they can make the best decision for their child about immunization. The AAP urges parents who have questions about vaccines to talk to their pediatrician. For more information, visit www.aap.org.