

IELTS Writing Sample #8

Contributed by Rad Danesh
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Should parents be obliged to immunise their children against childhood diseases?

Or do individuals have the right to choose not to immunise their children? You should write at least 250 words. You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

model answer: Some people argue that the state does not have the right to make parents immunise their children. However, I feel the question is not whether they should immunise but whether, as members of society, they have the right not to.

Preventative medicine has proved to be the most effective way of reducing the incidence of fatal childhood diseases. As a result of the widespread practice of immunising young children in our society, many lives have been saved and the diseases have been reduced to almost zero.

In previous centuries children died from ordinary illnesses such as influenza and tuberculosis and because few people had immunity, the diseases spread easily. Diseases such as dysentery were the result of poor hygiene but these have long been eradicated since the arrival of good sanitation and clean water. Nobody would suggest that we should reverse this good practice now because dysentery has been wiped out.

Serious diseases such as polio and smallpox have also been eradicated through national immunisation programmes. In consequence, children not immunised are far less at risk in this disease-free society than they would otherwise be. Parents choosing not to immunise are relying on the fact that the diseases have already been eradicated. If the number of parents choosing not to immunise increased, there would be a similar increase in the risk of the diseases returning.

Immunisation is not an issue like seatbelts which affects only the individual. A decision not to immunise will have widespread repercussions for the whole of society and for this reason, I do not believe that individuals have the right to stand aside. In my opinion immunisation should be obligatory. {mosgoogle left}