

Immunisation for Children and Staff policy

Policy statement

The Centre supports the National Immunisation Program (NIP) which is currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and promoted by the Commonwealth Government. The Centre also supports the protection of children and educators through immunisation, and provides families and staff with information on immunisation and vaccine preventable illnesses and diseases.

Links Education and Care Centres National Regulations 2018, National Quality Standard 2018

Regulations

- 88 Infectious diseases
- 90 Medical conditions policy
- 162 Health information to be kept in the enrolment record
- 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures

National Quality Standards

- 2.1.1 Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

Procedures

Children who attend before and after school centres are in close contact with a large number of other children for lengthy periods and are at increased risk of catching and transmitting illnesses and diseases. Some of these are preventable through immunisation. Educators are also at risk, particularly during pregnancy.

Vaccination is recognised as the most effective way to prevent the spread of most infectious diseases. In Australia, vaccination is optional. However, the Federal Government encourages parents to vaccinate their children by providing a free vaccination program, and by offering financial incentives to those whose children complete the program.

From 1st January 2018 all children are required to be immunised, unless they have completed a valid exemption form for medical reasons or in a valid medical catch up program, in order to receive the government funding of childcare rebate and childcare benefit. In NSW unimmunised children are unable to attend the service unless they have completed a valid exemption form for medical reasons or in a valid medical catch up program. They but may be asked to leave at the outbreak of vaccine preventable disease.

Strategies and practices

- The *Immunisation Policy* is explained to parents when they enrol their child in the Centre, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under the Policy. Excerpts from this Policy are included in the Family Handbook given to all parents.
- Parents are required to provide documentation of their child's immunisation status before their child commences at the Centre. A copy of the child's Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register is available on the medicare website.
- Staff are asked to provide documentation of their immunisation status, which is to be kept in their individual record.
- The Centre maintains a record of the immunisation status of each child and each staff member. It also maintains a [Register of Non-Immunised Children](#) and a [Register of Non-Immunised Staff](#) so that this information can be readily retrieved in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease.
- The Centre routinely minimises the spread of illness and disease by promoting handwashing and other hygiene practices, and maintaining clean and hygienic environments.

- In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, the Centre will notify the relevant health authority, and will follow its recommended guidelines and directives. Children who are not immunised may be excluded from the Centre for the duration of the outbreak. In addition, staff who are not immunised may be excluded from work.
- As soon as practicable after the outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease at the Centre, staff will notify parents or authorised emergency contacts when they collect their children. Information sheets will be made available to families. Parents of unimmunised children will be contacted directly and also provided with written notice detailing the specific period their child will be excluded from the Centre. Signs will be displayed prominently throughout the Centre informing families of the outbreak.
- If a child becomes unwell or is suspected of symptoms of an excludable infectious illness, the child's parents or authorised emergency contact are contacted immediately to collect their child. Wherever possible, the child is separated from the main group of children and one educator nominated to care for the child to reduce the risk of cross infection.
- In the case of serious ill health or hospitalisation, the child or staff member is to provide a medical certificate from their doctor verifying that they are sufficiently recovered to return to the Centre. However, the Nominated Supervisor has the final say on whether the child or a staff member may return to the Centre.
- The Centre maintains a Illness Register with the date, time, name and age of the child, symptoms, room/group, action taken, and diagnosis.
- The Centre encourages staff to discuss with their doctor the topic of immunisation and the additional risks of contracting a vaccine preventable illness or disease inherent in their close, regular contact with the children. The Centre also recommends that staff who may be considering pregnancy apply for screening for immunity for infections which carry risks of miscarriage or damage to the foetus (e.g. rubella, chicken pox, cytomegalovirus).
- The National Immunisation Schedule is displayed on notice boards throughout the Centre. Factsheets other resource materials on specific vaccine preventable diseases are available and, if required, can be obtained in a variety of languages.
- Educators are informed of the symptoms of excludable illnesses and disease and infection control through staff meetings and professional development, and are provided with educational materials.
- Risk assessments are conducted for unimmunised educators to determine if any alteration to their work is necessary.

Sources, further reading and useful websites

Sources

- Australian Immunisation Register <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/patients/acir/index.jsp>
- Education and Care Centres National Regulations 2018
- National Quality Standard 2018
- National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Recommended Immunisation Schedules: <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/nips> accessed 17th December, 2018
- NHMC. (2005). *Staying healthy in child care: Preventing diseases in childcare. 4th edition.* <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch43.pdf> accessed 6 March 2012

Comments:

Date Created: December, 2015

Date Reviewed: December, 2022