

Intereach Children's Services

Immunisation/Vaccination Procedure



Applies to	Intereach Family Day Care (FDC) and Intereach Out of School Hours (OOSH)				
Policy	NQS Two: Children's Health and Safety Policy				
Version	2.0	Date approved	31/08/2021	Next review date	31/8/2024

1. Objective

Childhood diseases can cause serious health complications and sometimes even death. The diseases can spread rapidly from child to child and within the community. If children remain unprotected, serious outbreaks, and even epidemics, of diseases may occur. Immunisation of children and adults is a safe and effective way of protecting the community from disease. It protects the person who has been immunised, children who are too young to be vaccinated, and other people who have been vaccinated but did not respond to the vaccine. It significantly reduces the risks, complication and mortality associated with vaccine-preventable diseases.

We respect the right of individual parent's decision of whether to vaccinate or not to vaccinate their children. However, under federal legislation and the "No Jab No Play" Policy, an objection is not a valid reason for an exemption, and conscientious objection to vaccination cannot be accepted as a reason for mandatory vaccines not be administered to children accessing early childhood centres and care.

Children's Services staff, educators and families can refer to current information on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) by accessing the [National Immunisation Program Schedule](#)

2. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor to:

- ensure that no child is enrolled in the service unless mandatory immunisation documentation is received (except for children who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, refer to 3.2.2 of this procedure); and,
- take reasonable steps to ensure children's enrolment forms are accurate (regulation 177). This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring the correct contact details are held for each parent, any medical conditions or allergies are listed, and the immunisation status of the child is correct.

3. Procedure

A child is considered overdue for a vaccination if four weeks has passed since the date of the 'next vaccine due' listed on their current immunisation history statement which allows a four-week window for parents/carers to arrange for the vaccine to be given. This aligns with Commonwealth Government childcare payments, which are not suspended until four weeks have elapsed following the vaccine due date and the Australian Immunisation Register has not received confirmation that the vaccine has been given in that time.

To enrol children at an Intereach Children's Services, parents/ guardians must provide a copy of one of the following documents:

- a current Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement showing that a child is 'up to date' with their immunisations;
- an AIR Immunisation History form for a child who does not have a complete immunisation history on the AIR and may be on a recognised catch-up schedule, which has been certified by an immunisation provider; and,

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- be fully immunised or on an approved vaccination catch-up program or have a medical reason not to be vaccinated.
- Request for enrolment of children under the age of six weeks will be assessed on case-by-case basis.

Parents/guardians must provide the correct documentation for children who are not immunised under the circumstances:

- an Immunisation History Form for children on catch-up programs;
- an Immunisation Medical Exemption Form for children who have a medical reason not to be immunised; and,
- for OOSH, Parents/guardians are able to provide the Interim NSW Vaccination Objection Form.

3.1. Proof of Immunisation

- Parents/guardians must provide mandatory proof of immunisation for all children on enrolment and following each scheduled immunisation.
- Care will be suspended if an updated Immunisation History Statement is not provided to the service after each scheduled immunisation. This will be at the discretion of the Nominated Supervisor. Childcare fees will be applied for any absent days due to non-compliance.
- The mandatory immunisation documentation is a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) and is the only type of immunisation record accepted by early childhood education and care services for the purposes of confirming enrolment and must be provided on enrolment. The Immunisation History Statement must show:
 - a list of the vaccines the child has received and, if applicable, which vaccines are due in the future and when. A medical exemption may also be listed, where applicable;
 - that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive; and,
 - the Medicare logo and Australian Government crest must be present and identifiable to be considered a valid Immunisation History Statement. For example, if the statement is page two of a letter from Medicare, both pages need to be presented to the service to confirm enrolment.
- The following documents are not accepted as proof of vaccination:
 - Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement showing that a child is NOT up to date;
 - Personal Maternal Health books from any state;
 - GP letter; and,
 - An overseas immunisation record.

3.1.1 Accessing the AIR

The AIR provides an Immunisation History Statement to parents/guardians, which is used to help keep track of their child's immunisation for enrolment in early childhood services. Parents/guardians can access updated statements at any time (up to the child being 14 years of age) by:

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- using their Medicare online account through [myGov](#). Steps to access their child's Immunisation History Statement is available at [How to get an immunisation history statement](#) using the Medicare online account;
- using the Medicare Express Plus App'; or,
- calling the AIR General Enquiries Line on 1800 653 809 (mailed statements may take up to 14-days to arrive).

3.1.2 Grace Period

OOSH services will apply permanent exemptions for children who have commenced formal schooling and attending before and after school care. Refer to [NSW Health Q&A about vaccination requirements for child care](#) for further details.

Children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage are eligible to enrol in a service under a grace period (16-weeks commencing from the date the child first attends the service), without having provided proof of up-to-date immunisation. The grace period provisions allow the family to continue to access early childhood education and care services while receiving information and assistance to get their child's immunisations up to date and to obtain the required Immunisation History Statement from the AIR that needs to be provided to the service.

Families who meet any of the following criteria may be eligible for the grace period:

- evacuated children following an emergency (such as flood or fire);
- children in emergency care (for example, emergency foster care) under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC) and Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW);
- children in the care of an adult who is not their parent due to exceptional circumstances such as illness or incapacity;
- children identified by their parents as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
- other children who are experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage, including children who hold or whose parents hold a health care card, pension concession card, Veterans Affairs Gold or White card, children from a multiple birth of triplets or more and children who are refugees or asylum seekers; and,
- children known to child protection, including children who are on or who have been on a Child Protection Order, children in or who have been in foster care or out-of-home care, children who have a report made about them under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC) or under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) and families that have received support through Family Services including ChildFIRST, Services Connect or an integrated family service.

3.3.1 Record Keeping

- Each service must maintain a register which captures each child's immunisation status.
- Services will check that an updated approved immunisation form has been provided for each child after each immunisation milestone (6 weeks, 4 months, 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, and 4 years of age). The status for each child needs to be marked as "Up to date". Services may record this on a separate register, in the relevant childcare software.
- Immunisation register/s and immunisation forms are stored in a secure location. Records are retained for three years from the date from which an enrolled child ceases care at a service.

3.1.4 Child Care Subsidy

The Commonwealth Rebate in the form of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is not applied to families who are not eligible under the 'No Jab, No Pay' Federal Policy.

3.2. Educators and staff

Educators and staff are encouraged to have up to date vaccinations in accordance with the [NSW Vaccinations - Early Childhood Staff](#) and [VIC Vaccinations for people working with children](#) as well as other available vaccines recommended by the Department of Health, such as influenza and COVID-19.

Where staff have received vaccinations, it is requested that history statements be provided to Intereach for record keeping.

Where the children of educators, including FDC educators or Intereach workers attends the service (including their own service), immunisation history statements of their children will also be required in line with this Procedure.

3.3. Infectious Diseases Outbreak

- Educators and staff must notify the Infectious Diseases Officer at the local Public Health Unit of any suspected or confirmed outbreak vaccine-preventable infectious disease. For FDC, educators must notify the Coordination Unit as soon as reasonably practical, who will notify the Infectious Disease Officer.
- Parents will be notified and provided relevant information, where there is a suspected and/or confirmed outbreak of a vaccine-preventable infectious disease.

3.3.1 Exclusion from service

- In consultation with the Public Health Officer, Educators and Staff reserve the right to ask the parents of a child on medical exemption to stay at home if there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease at the service. This will assist in protecting the health and wellbeing of unvaccinated children and prevent the likelihood of infection being passed onto others.
- Any unimmunised child under 2 years of age will automatically be excluded from the service.
- School-aged children who are not immunised or fully immunised will be excluded from the service if there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.
- Payment of fees is required for children excluded during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease unless other arrangements have been discussed and agreed to by the Nominated Supervisor/educator.

4. Context	
4.1 Standards or other external requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017), National Quality Standards • Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017), Guide to the National Quality Framework • Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Childcare Service Handbook 2017 - 2018 • Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit – For Early Childhood Education and Care Services 2017, Accessed November 2019 from http://www.health.nsw.gov.au • NHMRC (2013), The Australian Immunisation Handbook, (10th ed.) Accessed November 2019 from http://www.immunise.health.gov.au • National Health and Medical Research Council 2013 (5th Ed), Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services • Department of Health, National Immunisation Program, Accessed November 2019 from www.health.gov.au/immunisation
4.2 Legislation or other requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Care Services National Regulations consolidated 2017 • Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 • NSW Public Health Act 2010, Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017 • VIC Public Health And Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015
4.3 Internal Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment form • Intereach Vaccine Policy • Intereach Vaccine Procedure

5. Document control			
Version	Date approved	Approved by	Next review date
1.0	02/12/2019	Robert Phillips - Acting Senior Manager, Children and Family Services	02/12/2022
2.0	31/08/2021	Michelle Tai – General Manager, Operations	31/08/2024