



## Immunisation Policy and Procedures

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to manage and prevent the spread of infectious illnesses and diseases. Our Centre has a duty of care to ensure that all children, families and educators are provided with a high level of protection during the hours of the services operation. This includes notifying children, families and educators when an excludable illness or disease is present in the service; maintaining a record of children's and educators' immunisation status; complying to relevant health department exclusion guidelines; and Increasing educators' awareness of cross infection through physical contact with other

### SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Acacia Children's Centres.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent some infections. Immunisation works by giving a person a vaccine—often a dead or modified version of the germ—against a particular disease. This makes the person's immune system respond in a similar way to how it would respond if they actually had the disease, but with less severe symptoms. If the person comes in contact with that germ in the future, their immune system can rapidly respond and prevent the person becoming ill.

Immunisation also protects other people who are not immunised, such as children who are too young to be immunised, or people whose immune systems did not respond to the vaccine. This is because the more people who are immunised against a disease, the lower the chance that a person will ever come into contact with someone who has the disease. The chance of an infection spreading in a community therefore decreases if a large proportion of people are immunised, because the immune people will not become infected and can protect the vulnerable people; this is known as 'herd immunity'

#### Enrolling a child into Acacia

Having an application accepted or being registered on a waiting list for a place at an early childhood service is **not** a confirmed enrolment.

Confirmation of enrolment can be given by the service, no more than two months prior to the child first attending, only once the parent/carer has provided an Immunisation History Statement from the AIR to the service that shows that the child:

- is up to date with their immunisations (specifically, that no vaccines are overdue two months prior to the first day of attending; see [key dates work form](#)) OR
- has commenced [a recognised catch-up schedule](#) and that the next due vaccine/s on the catch-up schedule are not overdue two months prior to the first day of attending; see [key dates work form](#)) OR
- has a [medical condition](#) that prevents them from being fully immunised for their age OR
- is eligible to enrol under the 16 week [grace period](#) while the service works with the family to obtain the necessary immunisations/documentation.

#### Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

Abide by the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, Therefore, before enrolling a child at Acacia, Nominated supervisor must first obtain evidence that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive



An Immunisation History Statement from the AIR is the only type of immunisation record accepted by early childhood and care services for the purposes of confirming enrolment and must be provided within the two months prior to the child starting at the service.

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.

- Provide information about immunisation in various methods
- Request families to provide updated immunisation records at least twice a year.
- During the 16 week grace period, early childhood education and care services are required to take reasonable steps to obtain the required Immunisation History Statement from the AIR.
- Develop a staff immunisation record
- Require all new and current staff to complete the staff immunisation record
- Regularly update staff immunisation records as staff become vaccinated
- Provide staff with information about vaccine-preventable diseases
- Take all reasonable steps to encourage non-immune staff to be vaccinated.
- Document advice given to educators and other staff, and any refusal to comply with vaccination requests.
- Notify families when an outbreak of an immunise-able disease occurs
- Exclude any child who is not immunised from the Service if and when an outbreak of an immunise-able infectious disease occurs to protect that child and to prevent further spread of infection. In the instance of the child being immunised and the Immunisation record not provided to the Service – the child would be viewed as not being immunised.
- Advise any staff members who fall pregnant to visit their GP immediately and have a test for Cytomegalovirus (CMV) to check their immunity. Any pregnant staff member who is at a heightened risk will not change nappies and will double glove when coming into contact with any body fluids, especially saliva.

#### **Families will:**

Under “**No Jab, No Play**” legislation –. All parents/guardians planning to enrol their child at Acacia must provide the service with:

- a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR); AND
- the statement must show that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.
- Provide the service with an updated copy of their child's current immunisation record every 6 months
- During the 16 weeks grace period parents/carers should endeavour to have their child vaccinated if required, and/or obtain the required Immunisation History Statement from the AIR and provide it to the service.

#### **Grace period**

There are some children in the community whose families face difficulties accessing vaccinations and/or the required documentation to prove immunisation status.

Under the legislation, some families are eligible to enrol and start at Acacia under a 'grace period' provision while they bring their children's vaccinations up-to-date and/or obtain the required documentation.

The grace period is for 16 weeks commencing from the date that the child first attends.



Acacia, with help from the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education and Training, will support families of children who are not up-to-date with their vaccinations and provide them with information as to where they can access vaccinations.

Children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage are eligible to enrol in a service under a grace period, 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 are eligible for the grace period.

#### **Evacuated children**

- Children evacuated following emergency (such as flood or fire)

#### **Children in emergency care**

- Children in emergency care (for example, emergency foster care) under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

#### **Children in the care of an adult who is not their parent**

- Children in the care of an adult who is not the child's parent due to exceptional circumstances such as illness or incapacity

#### **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Children**

- Children identified by their parents as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

#### **Other children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage**

- 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
- Children who are refugees or asylum seekers

#### **Children known to child protection**

- Children who are on or who have been on a Child Protection Order
- Children in or who 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
- Families that have received support through Family Services including ChildFIRST; Services Connect; a community-based child and family service; or an integrated family service.

#### **Resources for early childhood education and care services**

[The toolkit](#) has been designed to assist early childhood education and care services with their legal responsibilities and immunisation record management under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation in Victoria.

[Immunisation and enrolment decision aid](#): this flowchart outlines the steps required to make decisions in relation to immunisation status and enrolment.

[Key dates calculator](#): this tool allows early childhood services to enter relevant dates pertaining to immunisation and enrolment to determine compliance with Victorian requirements.

[Parent enrolment letter template](#): early childhood services can use this letter as a basis for correspondence with parents seeking to finalise enrolment. Copy, download or adapt this letter to suit your service.

[Grace period eligibility assessment form](#): use this assessment form to determine if a child who is not fully vaccinated can enrol and attend the service while the family seeks to obtain the required



immunisation documents. This form is for use by the service, in conversation with the parent. This is not a form for parents to complete on their own.

**Key dates work form for immunisation and enrolment**: this form can help your service quickly and easily assess if a child's vaccinations are up to date for their age in compliance with the definition in the legislation.

### Requesting an Immunisation History Statement

Printed copies of the Immunisation History Statement are available from a [myGov account](#) or:

- call the AIR on phone 1800 653 809
- visit a Medicare or Centrelink office.

Families who do not hold a Medicare card must call the AIR to request an Immunisation History Statement.

### Locate an immunisation provider

The Better Health Channel website has [a health service locator](#) that can assist Victorians to find their nearest immunisation provider.

### View the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation

View the legislation online [at Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents](#). (Please note, due to frequent changes to this site, a direct link to the Bill cannot be provided. Go to the 'Archive' link and look under '2015' for the [Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment \(No Jab, No Play\) Bill 2015](#))

### References:

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority.
- Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations 2018,
- ECA Code of Ethics.
- Staying Healthy in Child Care. 5th Edition
- Australia Childhood Immunisation Register
- Immunise Australia Program [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)  
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/early-childhood-professionals>

### BREACH OF THIS POLICY

Any educator or staff found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action

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