

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



2.9 Immunisation for Children and Staff

Background

Children who attend childcare Services 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. At Acorn all children in care are required to be immunised.

In addition, good personal and environmental hygiene practices help protect children against illness and communicable diseases.

Policy statement

The Service 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 Service 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.

The spread of vaccine preventable diseases within the Service is minimised through: monitoring immunisation records; complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children and staff; and, routine personal and environmental health and hygiene practices.

Strategies and practices

- The *Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy* is explained to parents when they enrol their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under the Policy. QA 2.1.4
- Parents are required to provide documentation of their child's immunisation status before their child commences at the Service, and evidence of each vaccination thereafter. For young children this will usually occur at 6, 12 and 18 months of age. The preferred form of documentation is a copy of the child's Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register. QA 2.1.4
- The Service routinely minimises the spread of illness and disease by promoting handwashing and other hygiene practices, and maintaining clean and hygienic environments. QA 2.1.3, 3.1.2
- In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, the Service will notify the relevant health authority, and will follow its recommended guidelines and directives. Children who are not immunised due to their age may be excluded from the Service for the

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duration of the outbreak. In addition, staff who are not immunised may be excluded from work. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3

- As soon as practicable after the outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease at the Service, staff will notify parents or authorised emergency contacts when they collect their children, and send a note sent home with the child. Information sheets will be distributed 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 Service. Signs will be displayed prominently throughout the Service informing families of the outbreak. QA 2.1.4
- If a child becomes unwell or is suspected of symptoms of an excludable infectious illness, the child's parents 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. QA 2.1.4
- 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 Service. However, the Nominated Supervisor has the final say on whether the child or a staff member may return to the Service. QA 2.1.1
- The Service maintains an Illness and Infectious Disease Register with the date, time, name and age of the child, symptoms, room/group, action taken, and diagnosis. QA 7.3.1
- The Service 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 Service 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). QA 2.1.4
- The National Immunisation Schedule is displayed routinely on Educa throughout the Service. Factsheets other resource materials on specific vaccine preventable diseases are available and, if required, can be obtained in a variety of languages. QA 2.1.4
- 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. QA 2.1.4

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure accurate immunisation records are maintained and consistently updated in line with the immunisation schedule for babies.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide documentation of their child's immunisation status before the child commences at the Service, and update this as changes occur.
- To inform the Service if a communicable disease occurs in the family because the child may become a carrier.

Links to other policies

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- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy

Sources

- Australian Immunisation Register
<http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/patients/acir/index.jsp> accessed 24 November 2013
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.
- The Australian Immunisation Handbook. (2013). 10th Edition
http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/Handbook_10-home accessed 24 November 2013
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 5th edition.*
http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_childcare_5th_edition_0.pdf accessed 24 November 2013

Further reading and useful websites

- Immunise Australia Program – <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/>
- National Health and Medical Research Council – <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>
- NCAC. (2011). *NCAC Factsheet for Families: Immunisation and child care.*
http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/P24_FFimmunisation_June11.pdf accessed 24 November 2013
- Queensland Health. (n.d.). *Creating Healthier Workplaces: Infection Control Guideline*
http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/infection_control_guideline.pdf
accessed 24 November 2013
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/>
- Service for Community Child Health – <http://www.rch.org.au/ccch/>
- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. (2013). *Immunisation in early childhood education and care services*
<http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/resources/pdfs/childcare-immunisation.pdf> accessed 24 November 2013
- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. (2013). [Immunisation in early childhood education and care services - Workplace Health and Safety Queensland](#)

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<http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/business/childcare/immunisation/index.htm>
accessed 24 November 2013

Date(s) reviewed:

14/05/2018							
17/07/2019							

Next review Date: 17/07/2020

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14/05/2018							

Next review Date: 14/05/2019