

Background

Children who attend early education and care services are in close contact with many 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 when pregnant.

Vaccination is recognised as the most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. In Australia, immunisation is optional. However, from 1 January 2016, parents must ensure their child's immunisations are up to date to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy. Exceptions are made for children with medical contraindications or natural immunity of certain diseases, and for those on a recognised catch-up schedule. Objections on the basis of personal, philosophical or religious beliefs (i.e. vaccination objections) are no longer accepted for exemption and result in ineligibility for Child Care Subsidy.

Prior to enrolling children, early education and care services are now required to obtain approved documentation from parents about their children's immunisation status.

Policy statement

This policy details the Services practices regarding the enrolment and continued attendance of children based on their immunisation status. It also details the actions the Service will take in the event of an outbreak of a disease which can be prevented by immunisation. The Service supports the protection of children and educators through immunisation and provides families and staff with information about 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 enroll their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under the policy. Excerpts from this policy are included in the [Parent Handbook](#) given to all parents.
- Parents are required to provide the approved 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 birth, 2, 4, 6, 12, and 18 months, and 4 years. The approved documentation required is one of the following: -
 - an official immunisation history statement issued by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) which provides evidence that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations.
 - a letter from a recognised immunisation provider (e.g., General Practitioner or immunisation nurse) which states the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations; or
 - an ACIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form (IM001) which has been signed by a General Practitioner

- If a child's immunisation status is not up to date, the Service may: -
 - Refuse to enrol the child;
 - Conditionally accept enrolment and/or attendance of the child with conditions (e.g. attendance may be limited for a specific period of time, or attendance may be limited to particular days or sessions); or
 - Cancel enrolment or refuse attendance of the child
- Staff are required to complete a Staff Immunisation Record detailing their immunisation status before they commence at the Service. They are required to review the form annually and up-date it whenever a change in status occurs.
- Staff are encouraged to keep up to date with their immunisations. A list of available and recommended immunisations is provided to all staff.
- The Service maintains a record of the immunisation status of each child and each staff member. It also maintains a Non-Immunised Children – Register and Non-Immunised Staff – Register so that this information can be readily retrieved in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease.
- The Service routinely minimises the spread of illness and disease by promoting correct handwashing and other hygiene practices and maintaining clean and hygienic environments.
- 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 may be excluded from the Service 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 Service, staff will notify parents or authorised emergency contacts when they collect their children and send a note home with the child. Information sheets will be distributed to families. Parents of unimmunised children will be contacted directly and be 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.
- 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 Service. However, the Nominated Supervisor has the final say on whether the child or a staff member may return to the Service.
- The Service maintains a Child Illness and Infectious Disease Register and Employee Illness and Infectious Disease Register with the date, time, name and age of the child or employee, symptoms, room/group, action taken, and diagnosis.
- 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).

- Pregnant Educators working with children under 2 years will be relocated to another position or transferred to another Service if a suitable position is not available at the current Service. Workers cannot exempt themselves from this requirement.
- Advise the Nominated Supervisor immediately if you become pregnant or plan to become pregnant, so staffing arrangements can be considered. All information will remain confidential.
- Provide a letter from your doctor confirming that you are fit to continue to work with children over 2 years – Doctor Letter for Pregnant Workers.
- Pregnant Educators will not carry out any nappy changing if another Educator is available for this task.
- The National Immunisation Schedule is displayed on notice boards throughout the Service. Factsheets and 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 and pregnant staff to determine if any alteration to their work is necessary (e.g., not to change nappies).

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.

Procedure and forms

- Non-Immunised Children – Register
- Non-Immunised Staff – Register
- Staff Immunisation Record
- Doctors Letter for Pregnant Workers
- Child Illness and Infectious Disease Register
- Employee Illness and Infectious Disease Register
- Reporting Infectious Diseases Procedure
- Illness Management Procedure

Links to other policies

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

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

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

QA	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
	3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
	7.1.3	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

Sources

- Department of Social Services. (2025). Immunisation and Health Check requirements for FTB. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/immunisation-requirements-for-ftb-part-a?context=22191>
- Department of Health and Aged Care. (2025). The Australian Immunisation Handbook. <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/>
- Services Australia. (2025). Immunisation history statements. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/immunisation-history-statements?context=60092>
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2020
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2025). Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy>
- Queensland Health. (2025). Immunisation Records. <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/immunisation/service-providers/records>

Further reading and useful websites

- National Health and Medical Research Council – <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/> accessed 25 June 2025

- Queensland Health – <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/> accessed 25 June 2025
- Service for Community Child Health – <https://www.rch.org.au/ccch/> accessed 25 June 2025
- Workplace Health and Safety (Queensland). (2025). Immunisation in early childhood education and care services. <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/resources/published-research/immunisation-early-childhood-education>
https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/82975/childcare-immunisation.pdf accessed 25 June 2025

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur, and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Kaylene Harper	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018.	January 2019
2	5 February 2019	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	February 2020
3	29 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	January 2021
4	14 October 2020	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed.	October 2021
5	22 September 2021	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed	September 2022
6	5 October 2022	Linda Hollard	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	October 2023
7	23 August 2023	Grace McKinstry	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed.	August 2024
8	9 July 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	July 2025
9	25 June 2025	Gen Mahaki	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	June 2026