

Immunization Requirements

Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.08(g) - Evidence of age-appropriate immunizations or a signed affidavit against such immunizations. The items shall be maintained for each child enrolled in the center on a form approved by the Department, and no child shall continue enrollment in the center for more than thirty (30) days without such evidence.

Group Day Care Homes: 290-2-1-.10(b)9. - Evidence of age-appropriate immunizations or a signed affidavit against such immunizations shall be maintained for each child enrolled in the Group Day Care Home on a form provided by the Department; **290-2-1-.10(b)9.(i)** - No child shall continue enrollment in the Group Day Care Home for more than thirty (30) days without such evidence.

Family Day Care Homes: 290-2-3-.08(1)(c) - Evidence of age-appropriate immunizations, or a signed affidavit certifying that the required immunizations conflict with the religious belief of the parent or guardian or a physician statement that immunization is contraindicated. **290-2-3-.11(1)(b)** - Age appropriate immunization, or an affidavit or physician's statement as described in Rule .08(1)(c) shall be required for each preschool age child upon admission to the home or within 30 days thereafter.

Rule Type: Non-Core Rule

Intent of the Rule

To protect the health of children at the child care facility. Routine immunizations at the appropriate age are the best means of protecting children against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Clarification

Immunizations are particularly important for children in child care settings because preschool-age children have the highest age-specific incidence or are at high risk of complications from many vaccine-preventable diseases. Early education and child care settings present unique challenges for infection control due to the highly vulnerable population, close interpersonal contact between children, shared toys and other objects, and the limited ability of young children to understand or practice good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.

Indicators

- ✓ Each child enrolled must have current documentation of age-appropriate immunizations upon enrollment or within 30 days thereafter.
 - Recommendation: It is best practice to have parents submit immunization certificates by their child's first day of attendance. This reduces the likelihood of not receiving the required information within the 30-day timeframe.
 - Note: The immunization requirements apply to all children who attend a child care facility either daily, part-time, or on a drop-in basis. School-age children require a certificate to be on file at their school and the child care program.
 - Reminder: Age-appropriate immunizations must be documented on the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231).

- TIP: Georgia Registry of Immunization Transactions and Services (GRITS) is a statewide web-based system that stores immunization information about Georgia residents. Child care facilities enrolled as GRITS providers can access a child’s vaccination history quickly and easily. For more information about GRITS and how to enroll, contact the GRITS Enrollment Coordinator at 404-463-0810 or 1-866-483-2958.
- ✓ Georgia law allows a physician to issue a “medical exemption” from immunizations when it is deemed medically necessary for the health of a child.
 - Note: Based on the Department of Public Health’s Immunization Guidelines, a medical exemption must be marked on the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231). A letter from the physician is not accepted as documentation of a medical exemption.
 - Reminder: Medical exemptions must be kept on file, are valid for one year, and may be reissued from year to year until a physician determines immunizations can be completed.
- ✓ Georgia law allows families to object to vaccinations on religious grounds by filing a notarized affidavit noting their objection.
 - Note: The only affidavit that may be used to register a religious objection to required vaccinations is DPH Form 2208. The affidavit does not expire.
 - TIP: This affidavit can be accessed at: <http://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/DPH%20Form%202208%20Religious%20Objection%20to%20Immunization%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>
 - Reminder: Religious affidavits must be notarized and kept on file at the child care facility.
- ✓ Expired immunization certificates must be replaced with a current certificate within 30 days of the date of expiration.
 - TIP: Develop a system to track and flag immunization certificates to identify expiration dates that are approaching.
 - Recommendation: Notify parents before the expiration of their child’s immunization certificate so an updated certificate can be obtained and provided.
 - Organizational Tips
 - File immunization certificates in a central location for easy access by child care staff, Department of Public Health personnel, child care consultants, etc.
 - Keep immunization certificates in a notebook, or other filing system, by month based on the expiration date. File the immunization certificate under the month before it expires. At the beginning of the month, pull the certificates filed under that month (that are a month away from expiring), and inform those families that a new immunization certificate will be required and the date by which the certificate is due.

Resources:

- Department of Public Health's Immunization Guidelines
<http://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/Immunizations/IPC-Form-3258-Imm-Guidelines.pdf>
- HealthyChildren.org
<https://healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/default.aspx>
- American Academy of Pediatrics
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/Pages/Default.aspx>
- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/>
- Caring for Our Children
<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/7.2.0.1>