

# Immunisation requirements and early childhood services

This page explains immunisation requirements for early childhood services, and what to do in the event of an outbreak. This information is based on the latest advice from [SA Health – early childhood services and immunisation requirements](#).

## Procedure

The [protecting children against vaccine preventable diseases procedure \(PDF 209 KB\)](#) outlines the processes for managing and recording the immunisation and infectious diseases requirements in accordance with the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* for children attending a Department for Education early childhood service. The site leader must follow the requirements in this [procedure \(PDF 209 KB\)](#).

The [immunisation requirements flow chart \(PDF 91 KB\)](#) can also assist with following the steps required to ensuring immunisation requirements are met.

Under the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011*, a child cannot enrol in or attend early childhood services unless all immunisation requirements are met (No Jab, No Play).

## New enrolments

Early childhood services must not enrol children into their service without a current immunisation record. This includes:

- a copy of their child's current immunisation record that shows that the child's immunisation is up-to-date or on catch up schedule with a future end date
- evidence that their child has an approved exemption from the Chief Public Health Officer.

Parents or carers can access an immunisation history statement via:

- [Medicare](#) through [MyGov](#)
- [Express Plus Medicare mobile app](#)
- contacting the [Australian Immunisation Register](#) general enquiries line on 1800 653 809 and requesting that a statement be posted to them.

Each service must take reasonable steps to make sure the parent or carer provides a current immunisation record for their child enrolled or attending a service.

If a parent or carer requires additional assistance with accessing their child's immunisation records, see [immunisation services available to assist families](#) on this page.

See [exemptions from meeting immunisation requirements](#) on this page.

## Existing enrolments

Children who are enrolled in an early childhood service will not be able to continue to attend if they have reached an immunisation schedule point and their parent or carer has not provided a current immunisation record within the specified timeframes.

See section on [timing to supply the approved immunisation record](#) below.

## Current approved immunisation record

For most children an approved immunisation record will be an extract from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), called an immunisation history statement. Parents should be directed to their immunisation provider if they need help.

Early childhood educators must sight the record and check if the immunisation status is up to date. The immunisation history statement will show:

- the child's name
- date of birth
- the date the statement was downloaded
- immunisation status.

The immunisation status will read 1 of 3 things:

- up to date
- catch-up schedule
- not up to date.

## Not an immunisation record

These are not approved immunisation records:

- a letter from a general practitioner
- the South Australian Child Health and Development Record
- the 'Blue Book'
- an overseas immunisation record.

## Catch-up schedule

If a child's immunisation history statement indicates the child is on a catch-up schedule then the child meets the immunisation requirements and is eligible to attend early childhood services.

This means that all children on a catch up schedule, regardless of the up to date or not up to date status can attend an early childhood service.

For more information:

- Australian Immunisation Register general enquiries line, 1800 653 809
- [SA Health immunisation](#)
- [immunisation requirements for early childhood services](#) (our public website).

## Overseas immunisation records must not be accepted

Overseas immunisation records must not be accepted as they are not an approved immunisation record under the Act.

Families will need to take a copy of their translated overseas immunisation record to an immunisation provider, who will enter this information into the Australian Immunisation Register.

Refer to [SA Health's early childhood services and immunisation requirements](#) for information on translation services.

## Timing to supply the approved immunisation record

Records must be given at the below times by parents or carers to show the child is up to date with all immunisations and the immunisations have been given at the correct schedule points.

If a child enrolls in or attends a service in between these specified times, then the record must be extracted no more than 1 month before enrolment or attendance.

A current approved immunisation record must be supplied at the time of the child's enrolment.

An updated immunisation record is required within the stated timeframes below:

- After the child turns 7 months of age but before the child turns 9 months of age, the immunisation record is due before the child turns 9 months of age.
- After the child turns 13 months of age but before the child turns 15 months of age, the immunisation record is due before the child turns 15 months of age.
- After the child turns 19 months of age but before the child turns 21 months of age, the immunisation record is due before the child turns 21 months of age.
- After the child turns 4 years and 2 months of age but before the child turns 4 years and 8 months of age, the immunisation record is due before the child turns 4 years 8 months of age.

# Exemptions from meeting immunisation requirements

## Approved exemptions under the Australian Government's No Jab No Play policy

Approved exemptions are if the:

- child has a medical contraindication to a vaccine, such as anaphylaxis
- child has natural immunity to a particular disease
- child is a part of an approved vaccine study
- vaccine is temporarily unavailable
- Secretary has determined that the child meets the immunisation requirements
- child is vaccinated overseas – [see below](#).

If a child is exempt under the Australian Government No Jab No Play policy an additional request for an exemption under the South Australian No Jab No Play is not required.

See [SA Health immunisation](#) for more information.

## Children vaccinated overseas

A child vaccinated overseas will not automatically be granted an exemption. The overseas schedule for which that child was vaccinated will need to meet Australian immunisation schedule requirements. An immunisation provider will need to assess if this meets the Australian requirements and enter all doses administered overseas into the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

## Chief Public Health Officer class exemptions

The Chief Public Health Officer can grant an exemption:

- in relation to a specified child or a group of children – for example, a child is at risk or vulnerable ([see below](#))
- in relation to specified early childhood services or early childhood services of a specified group.

## Current approved Chief Public Health Officer class exemptions

Children aged less than 7 months of age.

Children that attend an individual or approved provider who is eligible for the additional child care subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) with respect to that child.

For government preschools - early childhood services with an at-risk or vulnerable child attending may apply for an exemption from the immunisation requirements on behalf of the child. To apply, use the [SA Health Chief Public Health Officer exemption application form](#) (PDF 497KB). Read more about [completing this form](#). Services can apply even if they are not eligible to receive the Australian Government's Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing). More information about the ACCS is available on the [Services Australia](#) website.

The site leader should as far as possible, liaise with the parents or guardians and communicate that they are seeking an exemption.

A child is taken to be at risk of serious abuse or neglect if the child is at risk of suffering harm as a result of being subject to, exposed to, one or more of the following:

- serious physical, emotional or psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- domestic or family violence,
- neglect.

A child is also taken to be at risk where the child is in need of care and protection under relevant state or territory law.

## Completing the SA Health Chief Public Health Officer exemption application form

When completing the [SA Health Chief Public Health Officer Exemption Application form](#) (PDF 497KB) keep the following in mind:

- Site leaders should select the option on the form that reads 'ECS\* provider that is not eligible to receive the ACCS# (child wellbeing) and have an at risk/vulnerable child attending our service'.
- Site leaders can provide a brief description that outlines why they believe a child is at risk on the SA Health Chief Public Health Officer Exemption Application form. Evidence is not required to support the exemption application.
- SA Health will contact the preschool directly if it requires further information.

## Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands

Children who live or reside within the following communities are exempt from the legislation:

- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands
- Oak Valley community
- Yalata community.

# Temporary exemptions approved by the Chief Public Health Officer

Children who meet any of the below exemptions can continue to attend an education and care service during the temporary exemption period.

## Children under the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive

Children under the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection as per the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 are exempt from meeting the immunisation requirements for a 6 week period commencing on the day a:

- child in care is taken into the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
- child is transferred out of care from the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection under the Children and Young People Safety Act 2017 to another guardian or to their parent.

## Children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

Children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent are exempt from meeting the immunisation requirements for a 6 week period from the date on which they are enrolled.

## Applying for an exemption

Parents or legal guardians can apply for an exemption for their child including to permit their child to attend the Special Immunisation Service (SIS) to discuss their child's immunisation needs. The exemption must be applied for using the SA Health Chief Public Health Officer Immunisation Exemption Application Form.

An early childhood service provider can apply for an exemption on behalf of a child who they believe is at risk or vulnerable by using the SA Health Chief Public Health Officer Immunisation Exemption Application Form.

## More information

For more information see [SA Health's early childhood services and immunisation requirements](#) section under the question, What are the South Australian Chief Public Health Officer exemptions for No Jab No Play?

## Definition of an early childhood service

Under the [South Australian Public Health Act 2011](#) an early childhood service is a service that provides the education and/or care of children under the age of 6 years. This applies to any department early childhood service where their parent or carer does not remain at the service.

## Services that must comply

Examples of department operated services that must comply are:

- preschools
- long day care service
- family day care service.

## Exempt services

For examples see [early childhood services that are exempt from immunisation requirements](#).

## Immunisation services available to assist families

Health and Immunisation Management Services (HAIMS) can support families with meeting their immunisation requirements. Some of the services they provide include:

- assisting families who are having difficulty accessing immunisation records from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) and with their consent, email this to the preschool service
- assisting families by entering any immunisation records that do not appear on the AIR (i.e. overseas records) and providing a catch-up schedule records of vaccination if required, via email or post
- assisting with the translation of immunisation records
- providing on-site clinics that can offer support to upload or download immunisation records from the AIR and offer vaccinations to those needing catch-up
- supporting families with identified barriers for uptake of vaccinations.

HAIMS services are only available to Medicare card holders however, advice regarding vaccination options is available to non-Medicare card holders. Email and phone assistance is available state-wide, while on-site visits are only available in the metro areas.

The [HAIMS consent form \(PDF 419 KB\)](#) enables site leaders to assist families liaise with HAIMS.

HAIMS can be contacted at [nurse@haims.com.au](mailto:nurse@haims.com.au), by calling 8152 0363 or online at [www.haims.com.au](http://www.haims.com.au)

## Resources for early childhood services

## SA Health resources

You can send these SA Health resources to parents and school communities:

- [early childhood service provider FAQs \(PDF 84KB\)](#)
- [parent and carer FAQs \(PDF 133KB\)](#)
- [No Jab, No Play poster \(PDF 1.2MB\)](#)

## Legislative requirements resources

Staff resources to help meet legislative obligations:

- [Protecting children against vaccine preventable diseases procedure \(PDF 209 KB\)](#)
- [Immunisation requirements flowchart \(PDF 91 KB\)](#)
- [Letter to parents - Child unable to attend due to NJNP requirements \(PDF 111 KB\)](#)
- [Letter to parents - Up to date Australian immunisation record \(AIR\) due under NJNP requirements \(PDF 95 KB\)](#)
- [quick reference guide for site leaders to support parents and carers about immunisation requirements for early childhood services](#)
- [how to enter and maintain immunisation record in EYS – quick reference guide \(PDF 877 KB\)](#)
- [No Jab No Play – potential scenarios and courses of action on or after 7 August 2020 \(PDF 285 KB\).](#)

## Outbreak of an infectious disease

In the event of (or risk of) an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, the Chief Public Health Officer may request the early childhood service provides the following information within 24 hours:

- the name and date of birth of each child enrolled at the service
- immunisation records related to each child
- the contact details for a parent or carer.

This will enable the Chief Public Health Officer (or delegate) to review the immunisation status of children and to exclude any child at risk of contracting the disease.

## Reporting infectious diseases and exclusion requirements

See [infection control and employee immunisation programs](#) for detailed information about reporting and preventing the spread of infectious diseases.



Early childhood services are not required to interpret the National Immunisation Program childhood schedule, or provide advice about immunisation to parents or carers.

For more information contact the Immunisation Section, Communicable Disease Control Branch, phone 1300 232 272 or visit [SA Health immunisation](#).

## Contact

### Regulation and Compliance

Phone: 8226 1646

Email: [Education.NQFenquiries@sa.gov.au](mailto:Education.NQFenquiries@sa.gov.au)

## Related information

- [Infection control and employee immunisation programs](#)
- [First aid in schools and preschools](#)
- [Prescribed information to be displayed procedure \(PDF 156 KB\)](#)
- [Early childhood services that are exempt from immunisation requirements](#)
- [Quick reference guide for site leaders to support parents and carers about immunisation requirements for early childhood services](#)