



QUEENSLAND VACCINATION LEGISLATION – A HANDBOOK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES.

1 October 2016

Queensland vaccination legislation: A Handbook for early childhood education and care services

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1. Introduction

The Queensland Government has amended the *Public Health Act 2005* to give approved early childhood education and care services (ECEC services) the power to exercise discretion regarding enrolment and attendance of children who are not up to date with their immunisations. These changes will help to:

- better protect young and vulnerable Queenslanders from vaccine-preventable disease
- give ECEC services the option to refuse, cancel or place a condition on enrolment or attendance of children whose immunisation status is not up to date, and
- legally protect approved ECEC services that make decisions about a child's enrolment or attendance based on the child's immunisation status.

For individual ECEC services choosing to support Queensland's new vaccination legislation, the following information will assist in understanding what the changes mean, and provide resources to help your centre make adjustments.

More detailed information on the legislative changes and an electronic copy of this handbook is available at www.qld.gov.au/vaccinate

To avoid confusion, the terms 'immunisation' and 'vaccination' are used interchangeably throughout this handbook, although they refer to slightly different, although related, processes. 'Immunisation' means both being administered a vaccine and becoming immune to a disease as result of being vaccinated. 'Vaccination' simply means being administered a vaccine.

This Handbook has been developed by the Queensland Department of Health and the Department of Education and Training in consultation with Queensland's early childhood education and care sector.





2. Benefits of immunisation

Immunisation is a proven and effective public health strategy, and a key health priority of the Queensland Government. Recognised as one of the most successful public health interventions introduced in Australia, immunisation has helped maintain and protect community health by reducing or eradicating vaccine-preventable diseases.

Worldwide, immunisation currently prevents an estimated 2 to 3 million deaths per year. In Australia diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b and poliomyelitis do not occur, or are extremely rare, due to immunisation.

Immunisation can also help protect those who cannot be vaccinated. When a high percentage of the population has immunity to a disease because they have been vaccinated, the spread of infectious disease can be slowed or stopped. It is therefore less likely that an unimmunised person will come in contact with a vaccine-preventable disease. This coverage is sometimes referred to as ‘herd immunity’ and it benefits those who cannot be vaccinated such as:

- children too young to be vaccinated
- children who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons
- people who are immuno-suppressed, and
- people whose immune system does not make an adequate response to vaccination.

Many parents support immunisation and currently Queensland has a high childhood immunisation rate of approximately 92%. Although this rate is high and comparable to other Australian states and territories, it indicates that as at October 2015 up to 35,000 children five years and under are not up to date with their vaccinations, and may be at risk of contracting serious and life threatening vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccine-preventable conditions can spread rapidly and have potentially devastating consequences, especially in an early childhood care or education setting where children are in close contact. High immunisation rates within the early childhood education and care sector can raise the level of protection for Queensland children.

3. Overview of new vaccination laws

Two separate laws relating to childhood immunisation took effect on 1 January 2016.

The Australian Government has amended the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999* to ensure children fully meet immunisation requirements for payment of child care benefit, child care rebate or the family tax benefit Part A supplement; and extend the immunisation requirements to include children up to 19 years of age. These changes are commonly known as the Australian Government's *No Jab, No Pay law*. Queensland's *Public Health Act 2005* protects early childhood education and care (ECEC) services that choose to refuse, cancel or place a condition on enrolment or attendance of children whose immunisation status is not up to date. The Queensland law is discretionary, not mandatory.

These laws are mutually exclusive. That is, if your service chooses to accept enrolment of a child not up to date with their vaccinations, the family's family assistance payments will still be impacted under proposed Australian Government No Jab No Pay measures. Parents should be made aware of the different impacts of each law to avoid potential confusion.

The Queensland Government recommends that parents keep their children's vaccination status up to date at all times. This will ensure the family is providing their children with the best protection against serious and potential life threatening vaccine-preventable diseases and reduce concerns about losing family assistance payments or limiting their options for early childhood education and care.

The following table indicates the major differences between each law.

3.1 Australian and Queensland legislation

	Australian Government legislation 'No Jab No Pay'	Queensland Government legislation
Effective from	1 January 2016	1 January 2016
What will change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immunisation requirements already in place for Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate and the Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A end-of-year supplement will apply to children of all ages (except for children under 12 months for the FTB Part A supplement).• Conscientious objection will be removed as a reason for a vaccination exemption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It will legally protect approved ECEC services in Queensland if they use their discretionary power under the new legislation and make decisions about enrolment and attendance of children based on their immunisation status.
What does this mean?	Children whose immunisation status is not up to date and do not have an approved medical exemption will no longer be able to access these payments (except children under 12 months will still be able to receive the FTB Part A supplement regardless of their immunisation status).	Children whose immunisation status is not up to date can have their enrolment cancelled, be refused attendance, or can have a condition imposed on their enrolment or attendance depending on ECEC services' policies.
More information	www.humanservices.gov.au	www.health.qld.gov.au 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

4. Queensland's vaccination legislation

4.1 A snapshot

The Queensland Government has amended the *Public Health Act 2005* to:

- better protect young and vulnerable Queenslanders from vaccine-preventable disease
- give ECEC services the option to refuse, cancel or place a condition on enrolment or attendance of children whose immunisation status is not up to date, and
- legally protect approved ECEC services that make decisions about a child's enrolment or attendance based on the child's immunisation status.

This legislation only applies to ECEC services approved under the *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) 2011* or the *Queensland Education and Care Services Act 2013*. Unregulated services are not covered.

The legislation took effect on 1 January 2016.

These changes do not make immunisation mandatory, and do not force ECEC services to refuse enrolment or attendance of children whose immunisation status is not up to date.

Individual ECEC services can choose to ask parents to provide:

- an immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) when enrolling their child
- and an updated immunisation history statement when their child passes the vaccination age milestones of 2, 4, 6, 12, 18 months and 4 years.

The immunisation history statement will clearly indicate a child's immunisation status is either up to date or not up to date. If the child is not up to date your service can choose to:

- refuse enrolment of the child
- cancel enrolment or refuse attendance of the child, or
- impose a condition on the child's enrolment or attendance.

If your service adopts the measures under the new Queensland law, you should have a policy on the enrolment and attendance of children whose:

- immunisation status is not up to date with the immunisation schedule, or
- parents who do not provide an immunisation history statement.

The course of action is at the discretion of your service. However, there are certain steps you must take to ensure that you are legally protected when refusing a child's enrolment or attendance based on their immunisation status.

4.2 The details

4.2.1 New enrolments

Section 160B of the *Public Health Act 2005* details the prescribed process for children who are new enrolments.

For new enrolments, your service can choose to:

- refuse enrolment of children whose immunisation status is not up to date
- accept enrolment but refuse attendance of children until proof of up to date immunisation status is provided, or
- conditionally accept enrolment or attendance until proof of up to date immunisation status is provided.

To exercise this discretionary power and to be legally protected, your service must:

- request that the parent provide an immunisation history statement showing that their child's immunisation status is up to date
- on making the request, inform the parent of the potential consequences for their child's enrolment or attendance, if their immunisation status is not up to date, and
- provide a reasonable time-frame for the parent to provide the immunisation history statement.

It is up to your service to decide what is a reasonable time-frame for providing the immunisation history statement when enrolling a child.

4.2.2 Existing enrolments

Section 160C of the *Public Health Act 2005* details the prescribed process for children who are already enrolled.

For existing enrolments, your service can choose to:

- cancel enrolment of children whose immunisation status is not up to date
- refuse attendance of children until proof of up to date immunisation status is provided, or
- impose another condition on the child's enrolment or attendance until proof of up to date immunisation status is provided.

To exercise this discretionary power and to be legally protected, your service must:

- be satisfied that the child has passed one of the vaccination milestones under the National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland (see section 7.1)
- request the parent provide an immunisation history statement showing that their child's immunisation status is up to date
- on making the request, inform the parent of the potential consequences for the child's enrolment or attendance, if their child's immunisation status is not up to date, and
- give the parent at least four weeks to provide the immunisation history statement.

4.2.3 Conditional enrolment or attendance

For children whose immunisation status is unknown or not up to date, your service can place a condition on the child's enrolment or attendance, relevant to their immunisation status.

For example, if a parent does not provide proof of an up to date immunisation status, your service can advise the parent that until an up to date immunisation history statement is provided:

- attendance may be limited for a specific period of time, or
- attendance may be limited to particular days or sessions.

4.2.4 Vulnerable children

Under the new Queensland legislation, your service has the flexibility to accommodate vulnerable children whose immunisation status may be unknown or not up to date.

The Queensland Government recognises the importance of immunisation and high quality education and care for all children. It is not the intention of the legislation to disadvantage vulnerable children.

4.2.5 Medical contraindication and catch-up

Your service cannot cancel or refuse enrolment/attendance of a child on the basis of their immunisation status if they:

- have a medical contraindication to some or all scheduled vaccines, and/or
- are on a recognised vaccination catch-up schedule.

While technically not fully vaccinated, these children are still classified as having an up to date immunisation status, and this should be indicated on their immunisation history statements. If not, the parent should discuss this with their child's immunisation provider.

4.2.6 Homoeopathic treatments

Children who have only had homoeopathic treatments will be shown as not up to date on their immunisation history statements. Enrolment and attendance of these children is at the discretion of your service.

4.2.7 Parents who refuse vaccination

Some parents may choose not to vaccinate their children entirely, they may choose to delay vaccination or only choose some vaccines. In these cases the child's immunisation status will show as 'not up to date'. Under Queensland law, enrolment and attendance of these children is at the discretion of your service.

Australian Government legislation about a child's immunisation status and family assistance payments no longer permits 'conscientious objection' as a valid exemption to immunisation. Children whose immunisation status is not up to date will not be able to access family assistance payments of Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate and Family Tax Benefit Part A end-of-year supplement. For more detailed information on the Australian law visit www.humanservices.gov.au



4.2.8 Children without proof of immunisation status

As Queensland's new vaccination legislation is discretionary, ECEC services may choose to accept enrolment or attendance of children whose immunisation status is not up to date or is unknown.

Section 160D of the *Public Health Act 2005* stipulates that children whose immunisation status is unknown will be considered as not vaccinated.

4.2.9 Legal protection

Section 179 of the *Public Health Act 2005* has been amended to stipulate that services who act honestly in making decisions on the enrolment or attendance of children based on their immunisation status are not liable civilly or criminally or under an administrative process.

This means that services are protected from liability for making the decision to refuse enrolment or attendance of children not up to date with their vaccinations. Similarly, protection is also offered should services decide to accept enrolment or attendance regardless of immunisation status.

Refusing to allow the enrolment or attendance of a child based on the child's immunisation status is not considered discriminatory.

5. Proof of immunisation status

An immunisation history statement is required to prove a child's immunisation status. Section 160A of the *Public Health Act 2005* defines this statement as being:

- an official record issued by the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) or
- a letter from a recognised immunisation provider (e.g. a General Practitioner or recognised immunisation nurse).

The Red Book, or Personal Health Record from Queensland Health is a good record for parents. However, as it contains hand written immunisation records it is not recognised as an official record of a child's immunisation status and is not an acceptable form of proof of vaccination.

5.1 Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) immunisation history statement

The AIR immunisation history statement contains important information about a child's vaccination history, and vaccinations the child is due to receive. For ECEC services to implement their preferred policy under new Queensland legislation they should refer to the line titled Immunisation Status which is located at the top of the page. See following examples for exact location of immunisation status on the immunisation history statement.

Parents can obtain an immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for their child free of charge by:

- going online and accessing *mygov.au* and linking their Medicare account to view or download the immunisation statement www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-online-services
- using the Medicare Express Plus App www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/express-plus-mobile-apps#a3 on a mobile or tablet. Download the app through Google Play© or iTunes© (view and email using Gmail)
- calling the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) on 1800 653 809

For more information about the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), visit www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register



Immunisation history statement

As at: 28 October 2016
For: PHILLIP CLIVE
Date of birth: 04 May 2010
Immunisation status: up to date

Schedule	Date given	Immunisation	Brand name given
Birth	04 May 2010	Hepatitis B	Hepatitis B
2 months	07 Jul 2010	Diphtheria Hib Hepatitis B Pertussis Polio Tetanus Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
4 months	20 Sep 2010	Diphtheria Hib Hepatitis B Pertussis Polio Tetanus Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
6 months	01 Dec 2010	Diphtheria Hib Hepatitis B Pertussis Polio Tetanus Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
12 months	01 May 2011	Measles Mumps Rubella Meningococcal C	Priorix Meningitec
18 months	04 Nov 2011	Varicella	Varilrix
4 years	01 Jun 2014	Diphtheria Pertussis Polio Tetanus Measles Mumps Rubella	Infanrix-IPV Priorix

Next immunisation/s due	Date Due
No vaccines due.	
Notice/s	
This child has received all vaccines required by 5 years of age.	

This child's immunisation status is **Not Up to date**



Australian Government
Department of Human Services

medicare

Immunisation history statement

As at: 18 September 2016
For: RYLEE BLAIR
Date of birth: 08 August 2013
Immunisation status: not up to date

Schedule	Date given	Immunisation	Brand name given
2 months	20 Oct 2013	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B Polio Hib	Hexaxim

Next immunisation/s due	Date Due
Hib	20 Dec 2013
Hepatitis B	20 Dec 2013
Polio	20 Dec 2013
Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis	20 Feb 2014
Measles Mumps Rubella	08 Aug 2014
Meningococcal C	08 Aug 2014
Varicella	08 Feb 2015

The Australian Immunisation Register is a national register that records vaccinations given to people of all ages living in Australia. Immunisations given before 1 January 1996 are not displayed on the statement. Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained on the Australian Immunisation Register is correct. The data is based on information provided by vaccination providers and the accuracy of data is dependent on the quality and timeliness of information provided. If an immunisation is missing from this statement and was given more than one month ago, your vaccination provider will need to send the missing information to the Australian Immunisation Register. If any of the immunisation details shown on the statement are not correct, please ask your vaccination provider to call us on **1800 653 809** to provide the correct details. If you have any questions about this statement, please call the Australian Immunisation Register on the number above (call charges may apply).

5.2 An alternative immunisation history statement

A letter from a recognised immunisation provider (e.g. a GP, council or health service) detailing a child's immunisation status is also an acceptable form of proof of vaccination. However, parents should be advised that this may incur a consultation fee.

A statement from a recognised immunisation provider will need to clearly indicate whether the child's immunisation status is up to date or not up to date as per the National Immunisation Program Schedule for Queensland. An up to date status includes cases where a child is on a recognised catch-up schedule or has a documented medical exemption.

A template statement for immunisation providers to use is available to download at www.health.qld.gov.au and is illustrated below.

Practice Name

Practice Address

dd/mm/yyyy

To whom it may concern

RE: Immunisation status of insert child's name, date of birth, full address

This is to certify I am a recognised immunisation provider and I have reviewed the immunisation status of the child named above, as outlined in the National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland.

This child's immunisation status is **up to date**. (Select from drop down options).

Please note, 'up to date' includes children who are:

- age appropriately immunised according to the National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule Queensland;
- children who have a medical contraindication to a vaccine or vaccines but who are otherwise age appropriately immunised according to the NIP Schedule Queensland; and
- children who are on an immunisation catch-up schedule.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at insert contact details.

Yours faithfully,

Insert full name and sign above

Insert medicare provider number or AIR registration details

6. Scenarios and suggested responses

The following scenarios have been developed to assist your service in making decisions regarding enrolments and attendance under the new Queensland legislation.

While potential scenarios involving the Australian Government's *No Jab, No Pay* law have been included in the following table it is advisable that families seek clarification from the Australian Government on how changes will affect their individual circumstances.

Scenario	Suggested response
Families are confused about the Queensland and Australian Government laws relating to immunisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise the family that on 1 January 2016, new state and Australian Government laws relating to immunisation came into effect. Under these new laws, a child's immunisation status will affect family assistance payments and may limit the family's childcare options. • Queensland legislation is separate from Australian Government legislation. • Under the new Queensland legislation, children enrolled or attending an ECEC service whose immunisation status is not up to date can have their enrolment cancelled or be refused attendance, or have a condition placed on their enrolment or attendance depending on the policy of individual ECEC services. • Changes to Australian Government legislation relate to eligibility to receive certain family payments from the Australian Government (such as child care benefits, and family tax benefit) depending on the child's or young person's immunisation status. Families are advised to seek clarification and gain more detailed information at www.humanservices.gov.au • Inform the family that the Queensland Government is advising parents to keep their children's vaccination status up to date at all times. By doing this, the family is providing their children with the best protection against serious and life threatening vaccine-preventable diseases and they don't have to worry about missing out on family assistance payments or limiting their ECEC options.
Parent provides an immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) or a letter from a recognised immunisation provider which states that the child is not up to date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course of action you choose depends on your service's policy. • If you intend to cancel or refuse enrolment/attendance or place a condition on the child's enrolment/attendance, your service must follow the prescribed process (see section 4.2)
Parent advises that their child has a medical condition that prevents the child from being vaccinated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A medical exemption to vaccination can only be determined by, and reported to AIR by a GP • While technically not fully vaccinated, the child's immunisation history statement should clearly show an up to date immunisation status and indicate that the child has a medical contraindication to a particular vaccine/s • If not, the parent should discuss their child's immunisation status with their GP who is responsible for reporting a medical contraindication • Children with a medical contraindication reported to and recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) cannot have their enrolment cancelled or be refused attendance based on their immunisation status
Parent advises that their child is on a vaccination catch-up schedule.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children on a recognised vaccination catch-up schedule cannot be refused enrolment or attendance • Evidence that the child is on a catch-up schedule must be provided by the family's GP or immunisation provider
Parent advises that their child has natural immunity to a vaccine-preventable disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exemption to vaccination due to natural immunity can only be determined by, and reported to AIR by a GP • While technically not fully vaccinated, the child's immunisation history statement should clearly show an up to date immunisation status and indicate that the child has natural immunity to a particular disease • If not, the parent should discuss their child's immunisation status with their GP who is responsible for reporting natural immunity • An exemption based on natural immunity can only be given for measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chickenpox) and hepatitis B

Scenario	Suggested response
Parent advises that they either do not have an immunisation record at all, or only an incomplete or inaccurate immunisation record (e.g. a child from overseas).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise the parent to discuss the child’s immunisation status with their GP or immunisation provider and how the child’s immunisation status can be brought up to date. • The child may be placed on a catch-up schedule, in which case, the child cannot be refused enrolment/attendance based on their immunisation status • For families that fail to act, the course of action you choose on the enrolment or continued attendance depends on your service’s policy. • If you intend to cancel or refuse enrolment/attendance or place a condition on enrolment/attendance, your service must follow the prescribed process (see section 4.2)
Parent advises they do not vaccinate their child/ren or are delaying vaccination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Conscientious objection’ is no longer accepted as a reason for a vaccination exemption under Australian Government legislation effective from 1 January 2016, For more information and clarification refer to www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/immunising-your-children • If a parent chooses not to vaccinate or delay vaccination, their child’s immunisation status will show as ‘not up to date’ on their immunisation history statement. • The course of action you choose on the enrolment or continued attendance depends on your service’s policy. • If you intend to cancel or refuse enrolment/attendance or place a condition on enrolment/attendance, your service must follow the prescribed process (see section 4.2)
Parent advises that they have treated the child homoeopathically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who have only had homoeopathic treatments will be shown as not up to date on their immunisation history statements. • Enrolment and attendance of these children is at the discretion of your service. The course of action you choose depends on your service’s policy.
Enrolment and attendance of vulnerable children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your service has the flexibility to allow enrolment or attendance of vulnerable children whose immunisation status may be unknown or not up to date. • The Queensland Government recognises the importance of immunisation and high quality education and care for all children. • The legislation is not intended to disadvantage vulnerable children.
Families are wanting to use the child’s red book (Personal Health Record) as proof of vaccination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise families that the new Queensland vaccination legislation is very specific about the documentation that can be used to prove a child’s immunisation status • The only documentation that can be used is either an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) immunisation history statement or a statement from the family’s immunisation provider • The red book or Personal Health Record is not acceptable proof of vaccination because it only contains hand written updates and can be incomplete and difficult to interpret. It also does not indicate whether a child’s immunisation status is up to date
Families are confused about what services the new legislation applies to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise families that the new Queensland legislation applies to approved early childhood education and care services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Long day care – Kindergarten – Pre-Prep – Family day care – Outside school hours care/vacation care – Limited hours care or occasional care • Unregulated services, such as nannies, babysitters, au pairs or playgroups are not covered under the Queensland legislation. • The new Australian Government legislation applies to parents and carers receiving Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate or Family Tax Benefit Part A. Families are advised to seek clarification from www.humanservices.gov.au

7. Vaccine-preventable diseases

The Australian Government's Immunise Australia Program funds the purchase of vaccines to help protect millions of Australians. Vaccines trigger the immune system to fight certain diseases, so when a vaccinated person comes in contact with these diseases their immune system responds more effectively, either preventing the disease developing, or greatly reducing its severity. Many diseases are now rare due to high community immunisation rates, but many still exist and can lead to extremely serious illness and complications.

The Immunise Australia Program makes available vaccine to protect against the childhood vaccine-preventable diseases listed in the table below. More information is available online at www.conditions.health.qld.gov.au/healthconditions

Disease	Description
Diphtheria	Bacterial disease spread by respiratory droplets – causes severe throat and breathing difficulties, nerve paralysis and heart failure
Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib)	Bacterial disease spread by respiratory droplets – causes meningitis (infection of tissues around brain), epiglottitis (blockage of airway), septicaemia (blood infection) and septic arthritis (joint infection)
Hepatitis A	Virus spread by contact with faecally infected water/food or contact with infected faecal material – causes jaundice (yellowing of skin/eyes), nausea, vomiting, liver pain, and tiredness
Hepatitis B	Virus spread mainly by blood, sexual contact or from mother to newborn baby – causes acute hepatitis (liver infection), liver cancer or chronic infection ('carrier')
Influenza (Flu)	Virus spread by respiratory droplets – causes fever, muscle and joint pains, pneumonia
Measles	Highly infectious virus spread by respiratory droplets – causes fever, cough and rash
Meningococcal disease	Bacteria spread by respiratory droplets – causes septicaemia (blood infection) and meningitis (infection of tissues around brain)
Mumps	Virus spread by saliva – causes swollen neck and salivary glands and fever
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Bacterial disease spread by respiratory droplets – causes 'whooping cough' with prolonged cough lasting up to three months
Pneumococcal disease	Bacterial disease spread by respiratory droplets – causes septicaemia (blood infection), meningitis (infection of tissues around brain) and pneumonia
Poliomyelitis (Polio)	Virus spread in faeces and saliva – causes fever, headache and vomiting and may progress to paralysis
Rotavirus	Virus spread by faecal-oral route – causes gastroenteritis, which can be severe
Rubella (German measles)	Virus spread by respiratory droplets – causes fever, rash and swollen glands but can cause severe birth defects in babies of infected pregnant women
Tetanus	Caused by toxin of bacteria in soil – causes painful muscle spasms, convulsions and lockjaw
Varicella (chickenpox)	Highly infectious virus – causes low-grade fever and rash (lumps that turn into blisters). If reactivated later in life, it causes shingles

7.1 National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland

The National Immunisation Program schedule outlines the vaccinations children should receive at different ages.

The National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland is subject to change and it is recommended ECEC services check online for updates to the Queensland Immunisation Schedule.

A [printable poster of the National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland](#) is also available online.



8. Administrative documents

8.1 Sample immunisation policy statement

IMMUNISATION POLICY STATEMENT

Queensland legislation for Early Childhood Education and Care services

On 1 January 2016 a new Queensland law came into effect. This law means:

approved early childhood education and care services can refuse enrolment or attendance of children whose immunisations are not up to date.

.....
[insert name of centre] supports this legislation and we are committed to the health and wellbeing of our staff, children and families. We encourage everyone to make sure their vaccinations are up to date.

To enrol your child and ensure their attendance at the service we require an immunisation history statement showing a child's immunisation status is up to date:

- upon enrolment
- throughout attendance (within four weeks of passing the vaccination milestones)

Details about how you can get a copy of your child's immunisation history statement or a copy of the National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland which gives the vaccination milestones is available from reception.

For more information about the law go to www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/immunisation/childcare/index.html

8.2 Template – Parent enrolment letter

The below template can be used by ECEC services when contacting parents in relation to enrolment of their children. It can be used in its entirety or adapted to meet individual circumstances.

[Insert name] Early Childhood Education and Care Service

[insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Immunisation Enrolment Requirements for 2016

I am writing regarding your application to enrol [insert child's first name] at [insert name of Early Childhood Education and Care Service].

You may be aware that on 1 January 2016 a new Queensland law relating to immunisation came into effect. Under this new law, approved early childhood education and care services can cancel, refuse or place a condition on enrolment or attendance of children whose immunisations are not up to date.

We are committed to the health and well-being of children in our care, their families, and our staff. This is why we will be supporting Queensland's new immunisation law.

You may also be aware the Australian Government's No Jab No Pay law came into effect on 1 January 2016. Under this new law, if your child is not fully immunised it will affect your family assistance payments. The Australian Government law is separate from the Queensland law. Under the Queensland law, approved early childhood education and care services can, at their discretion, allow children whose immunisation status is not up to date to attend. Whilst this is acceptable under the Queensland law, you should be aware that, under the Australian Government law, family assistance payments will be affected. It is recommended parents seek further information on how the Australian Government's No Jab No Pay law will affect their own circumstances at www.humanservices.gov.au (search for immunising your children).

To process [insert child's first name] enrolment application, we require an immunisation history statement showing [insert child's first name] immunisation status is up to date. The statement can be obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) by:

- going online and accessing mygov.au and linking their Medicare account to view or download the immunisation statement www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-online-services
- using the Medicare Express Plus App www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/express-plus-mobile-apps#a3 on a mobile or tablet. Download the app through Google Play© or iTunes© (view and email using Gmail)
- calling the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) on 1800 653 809

Throughout *[insert child's first name]* attendance at *[insert name of service]*, we will also require an updated immunisation history statement after *[insert child's first name]* passes each vaccination milestone as outlined in the National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland. The schedule is available at www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/immunisation/schedule

If *[insert child's name]* immunisation status is not up to date, or if we do not receive an immunisation history statement from you we may:

- cancel *[insert child's name]* enrolment, or
- refuse *[insert child's name]* attendance until proof of an up to date immunisation status is provided, or
- impose another condition on *[insert child's name]* enrolment or attendance until proof of an up to date immunisation status is provided.

It is important to keep *[insert child's first name]* immunisation status up to date at all times. By doing this, you provide *[insert child's first name]* the best protection against serious and life threatening vaccine-preventable diseases, and you don't have to worry about missing out on family assistance payments or limiting enrolment or attendance under Queensland's immunisation law.

Queensland Health has developed a smart phone app specifically for parents to keep a record of their child's immunisation history. The VacciDate app also reminds you when vaccinations and appointments are due.

Vaccidate is free and available to download from Google Play and iTunes stores.

If you have any questions, please contact us at *[insert contact details]*.

Yours sincerely,

.....
[insert name] Director
***[insert name]* Early Childhood Education and Care Service**

8.3 Template – Parent letter requesting updated immunisation history statement

The below template can be used by ECEC services when contacting parents in relation to requesting and updated immunisation history statement to ensure continued attendance at your service. It can be used in its entirety or adapted to meet individual circumstances.

[Insert name] Early Childhood Education and Care Service

[insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Updated immunisation history statement for [insert name of child]

I am writing to you to request an updated immunisation history statement for [insert child's first name].

As previously advised, throughout [insert child's first name] attendance at [insert name of service], we require an immunisation history statement after [insert child's first name] passes each of the vaccination milestones as outlined in the National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland. The schedule is available at www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/immunisation-schedule.pdf

Since [insert child's first name] has recently passed his/her [insert age milestone e.g., 2 month, 4 month, 6 month, 12 month, 18 month or 4 year] vaccination milestone, we require an immunisation history statement showing [insert child's name] is up to date with his/her vaccinations by [insert date – must give parents at least four weeks' notice].

The immunisation history statement can be obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) at any time by:

- going online and accessing mygov.au and linking their Medicare account to view or download the immunisation statement www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-online-services
- using the Medicare Express Plus App www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/express-plus-mobile-apps#a3 on a mobile or tablet. Download the app through Google Play© or iTunes© (view and email using Gmail)
- calling the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) on 1800 653 809

If *[insert child's name]* immunisation status is not up to date or if we do not receive an immunisation history statement by the date shown above we may:

- cancel *[insert child's name]* enrolment, or
- refuse *[insert child's name]* attendance until proof of an up to date immunisation status is provided, or
- impose another condition on *[insert child's name]* enrolment or attendance until proof of an up to date immunisation status is provided.

You may also be aware the Australian Government's No Jab No Pay law came into effect on 1 January 2016. Under this new law, if your child is not up to date with their immunisations, it will affect your family assistance payments.

It is important to keep *[insert child's first name]* vaccination status up to date at all times. By doing this, you provide *[insert child's first name]* the best protection against serious and life threatening vaccine-preventable diseases, and you don't have to worry about missing out on family assistance payments or continued attendance under Queensland's immunisation law.

If you have any questions, please contact us at *[insert contact details]*.

Yours sincerely,

.....
[insert name] Director
***[insert name]* Early Childhood Education and Care Service**

8.4 Template – Parent information/newsletter article

Childhood immunisation laws

On 1 January 2016, new Queensland and Australian laws relating to immunisation came into effect. Under these laws, your child's immunisation status may limit your childcare options and will affect your family assistance payments.

Keep your child's vaccination status up to date at all times. By doing this, you provide your child the best protection against serious and life threatening vaccine-preventable diseases and you don't have to worry about missing out on Australian Government family assistance payments or ongoing attendance under Queensland's childcare vaccination law.

Childhood immunisation

Around one in ten Queensland children may be at risk of contracting vaccine-preventable diseases, including the serious and potentially life-threatening measles and whooping cough. Immunisation is a safe and effective way of protecting your child from becoming seriously ill.

All vaccines used in immunisation within Australia are safe as they must pass stringent safety testing before the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will register it for use. Vaccines trigger the immune system to fight certain diseases, so when a vaccinated person comes in contact with these diseases their immune system responds more effectively, either preventing the disease developing, or greatly reducing its severity. Many vaccine-preventable diseases still exist and can lead to extremely serious illness and complications.

Changes to the Queensland's *Public Health Act 2005* (effective from 1 January 2016) means approved early childhood education and care services (ECEC services) can cancel, refuse or place a condition on the enrolment or attendance of children who are not up to date with their immunisations.

The only exemptions are where a child has a documented medical contraindication or is on a recognised vaccination catch-up schedule, so it is important that your child is vaccinated on the due date as outlined in the National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland.

[Amend as you see fit in your individual circumstance] This new law also means that *[insert name of service]* can request an immunisation history statement when you enrol your child at our service and then provide an updated record after passing the 2, 4, 6, 12, 18 months and 4 years vaccination milestones.

The immunisation history statement must show that your child's immunisation status is up to date. If a child is not fully vaccinated, but is on a recognised vaccination catch-up schedule, or has a documented medical exemption, their immunisation history statement will show as up to date.

Please discuss your child's immunisation status and needs with your doctor or healthcare provider.

VacciDate app

Queensland Health has developed a smart phone app specifically for parents to keep a record of their child's immunisation history. The VacciDate app also reminds you when vaccinations and appointments are due.

VacciDate is free and available to download from Google Play and iTunes stores.



Adult immunisation

Vaccination is also important for adults to boost immunity, protect those around us, catch-up on missed childhood doses, and to protect against diseases when travelling or for specific work activities.

Check with your doctor or healthcare provider to see what vaccines you've had and what you need.

Pregnant women are urged to have the free booster whooping cough vaccination in their third trimester to protect their unborn child for the first six weeks of their life.

If you or your partner are expecting or have recently had a baby, it is also important that your family and friends have a booster whooping cough vaccination as soon as possible to prevent spreading the infection to the newborn baby.

For more information visit www.qld.gov.au/vaccinate or call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

8.5 Vaccination promotional materials and information

Promotional materials are available to assist you in encouraging parents to immunise their children. Items include a fact sheet for parents and display posters.

To view, order resources and for more information go to www.health.qld.gov.au/news-alerts/campaigns/immunisation/childhood

Online resources available for download

VacciDate app (available for free download from Google Play and iTunes stores)



Download VacciDate
FREE from your app store.



Apple and the Apple logo are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

What's your date to vaccinate website www.vaccinate.initiatives.qld.gov.au

9. More information

13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

Queensland Health provides qualified and confidential health advice on 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the cost of a local call*. It is not a diagnostic service and should not replace medical consultation. In an emergency always dial 000.

*Calls from mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate than local call charges. Please check with your telephone service provider.

Public health units

Public health units focus on protecting health; preventing disease, illness and injury; and promoting health and well-being at a population or whole of community level across Queensland. Contact your local public health unit for information about local immunisation providers or clinics.

For up to date contact details of public health units, visit

www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/contact/public-health-units

Queensland Health website

Queensland Health provides comprehensive information about immunisation for babies, children, adolescents and adults, as well as requirements for certain occupations and international travel.

Visit www.qld.gov.au/vaccinate

Queensland Health vaccination campaign website

Queensland Health runs the 'What's your date to vaccinate' campaign including a dedicated website providing information on vaccination facts, dates and immunisation in general.

Visit www.vaccinate.initiatives.qld.gov.au

National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland

www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/immunisation-schedule.pdf

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

The Australian Immunisation Register is a national database that records immunisation details for all adults, adolescents and children in Australia.

Australian Government Immunise Australia Program

The Immunise Australia Program aims to increase national immunisation rates by funding free vaccination programs and communicating information about immunisation to the public and health professionals. Visit www.immunise.health.gov.au

Immunisation Myths and Realities: Responding to arguments against immunisation (5th Edition), available at www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/content/uci-myths-guideprov

National Centre for Immunisation Research & Surveillance (NCIRS)

Information resources for parents and care givers

www.ncirs.edu.au/consumer-resources/index.php

Information for immunisation providers and others

www.ncirs.edu.au/immunisation/index.php

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th Edition), available at www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/ch55

Australian Academy of Science

The Science of Immunisation: Questions and answers, 2016, available at www.science.org.au/learning/general-audience/science-booklets/science-immunisation





Queensland Health

Queensland Health Legislation –
A handbook for early childhood education and care services.

www.health.qld.gov.au