

Media statement

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Help keep your kids safe at Kindergarten and childcare

As the school year starts many parents are feeling nervous about sending their little ones off to Kindergarten or childcare. Knowing your child is up to date with immunisation can provide real peace of mind.

Sunshine Coast Public Health Physician Dr Andrew Langley said the start of Kindergarten or childcare is a great time for parents to review their child's vaccination dates, to make sure they are up-to-date or know when they are due for their next vaccination.

"The immunisation schedule can be hard to stay on top of. There is a big gap in the schedule from 18 months to four years so vaccination may not be top-of-mind," Dr Langley said.

"The routine childhood vaccinations for children four years of age aim to protect against serious diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough.

"Immunisation is extremely important and effective at preventing severe outcomes from life threatening infectious diseases.

"Our childhood immunisation rates are gradually improving, but below the 95% for good community immunity. Good community immunity prevents outbreaks of disease," Dr Langley said.

"Community immunity also helps protect people who can't be vaccinated, for example babies who are too young."

In the year to September 2018, 91 per cent of 1-year-old children, 90 per cent of two-year-old children, and 92 per cent of five-year-old children living in the SCHHS area had received all of their recommended vaccinations. This means approximately 1,400 local children across these age groups were without the protection from serious diseases such as measles and whooping cough that immunisations provide.

Dr Langley said; "One of the most important local barriers to childhood vaccination is parental hesitance. Parents who are hesitant about vaccinating their child often have questions or concerns but may not know how to get reliable information. GPs and Australian government websites are excellent sources of reliable information."

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service leads a range of important initiatives to reduce barriers to vaccination. These include the Jabba Jabba Indigenous childhood vaccination outreach service and specialised support and education for general practices that provide vaccination.

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For reliable information about childhood vaccination, see <http://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/immunisation/benefits/index.html>

Parents can also use the Queensland Health smartphone app 'VacciDate' to help keep track of their child's vaccinations.

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