

VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

AIM

The aim of this policy is to clearly outline the legal requirements with regard to vaccination and enrolments for children in Early Childhood Services.

RATIONALE:

It is a requirement in law that all children enrolled in Early Childhood Services in Australia must be vaccinated as per the National Immunisation Program Schedule in order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

In 14 September 2017 Parliament passed an amendment to the Public Health Act 2010 to strengthen vaccination requirements in early childhood education and care services. The changes means that from 1 January 2018:

- Children who are unvaccinated due to their parents conscientious objection will no longer be able to be enrolled in ECES
- It will be an offence for an approved provider to fail to comply with this requirement
- It will be an offence for a person to forge or falsify a certificate that is required to be provided under these requirements

IMPLEMENTATION:

As part of the enrolment process families will be asked to provide evidence from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that their child is immunised to the appropriate stage for their age in an acceptable format. They are provided with the links and information necessary to obtain this information.

The acceptable documents are:

- AIR Immunisation History Statement (fully immunised for age)
- Medicare Immunisation History Form (is on a recognised catch-up schedule)
- Medicare Immunisation Medical Exemption Form (has a medical reason not to be vaccinated)

Parents will automatically receive their child's AIR Immunisation History Statement in the mail after they complete their immunisation schedule. This usually occurs after 4 years of age. If the statement has not been received and is required for enrolment it may be obtained at any time:

- By calling the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809
- Through Medicare Online Services
- By emailing acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au
- By visiting your local Medicare Office

Overseas immunisation records cannot be accepted by BHCK. Children who are vaccinated overseas need to have their immunisation records assessed by an immunisation provider who will transfer their immunisation records to AIR and an updated AIR statement will then be issued.