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| Immunisation and enrolling in early childhood education and care services Information for early childhood education and care services |



### **No Jab, No Play**

Under the ‘No Jab, No Play’ legislation, before enrolling a child, early childhood education and care services must obtain a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that shows the child is up to date with immunisations for their age.

An Immunisation History Statement from AIR is the only form of documentation accepted for the purpose of enrolling in an early childhood education and care service.

After enrolment, parents/carers will need to continue to provide up to date Immunisation History Statements to their child’s early childhood service.

## About required documentation

To confirm enrolment for a child in long day care, kindergarten (3 and 4 year old kindergarten), family day care or occasional care (early childhood education and care services), parents/carers must provide your service with:

* a current Immunisation History Statement from the AIR; AND
* the statement must show that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, OR that there is a valid [immunisation medical exemption](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/im011) <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/im011> to a vaccine.

The Immunisation History Statement from the AIR lists the vaccines the child has received and, if applicable, which vaccines are due in the future and when. Immunisation medical exemption may also be listed, where applicable.

An Immunisation History Statement from the AIR is the only type of immunisation record that early childhood education and care services can accept for the purposes of confirming enrolment, and must be provided within the two months prior to the child starting at your service (see 'about the support period’ below for information on where there may be exceptions for some children).

The Medicare logo and Australian Government crest must be present and identifiable to be considered a valid Immunisation History Statement. For example, if the statement is page two of a letter from Medicare, both pages need to be presented to your service to confirm enrolment.

How can parents/carers get an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)?

Parents/carers can print a copy of their child’s Immunisation History Statement from their [myGov account](https://my.gov.au/LoginServices/main/login?execution=e1s1) <https://login.my.gov.au/las/mygov-login?execution=e1s1> or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app. Alternatively, parents/carers can also:

* call the AIR on 1800 653 809
* visit a Medicare or Centrelink office
* ask their immunisation provider to print an Immunisation History Statement

Refer to: [How to get immunisation history statements](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-to-get-immunisation-history-statements?context=22436) <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-to-get-immunisation-history-statements?context=22436>.

How can parents/carers who are not eligible for Medicare get an Immunisation History Statement from the AIR?

Families who are not eligible to hold a Medicare card can ask their immunisation provider to print an Immunisation History Statement, or they can call the AIR to request an Immunisation History Statement to be posted (allow up to two weeks for delivery by post).

What do parents/carers whose child’s vaccinations are not up to date need to do to obtain an Immunisation History Statement?

If a child's vaccinations are not up to date, then parents/carers should organise an appointment with their GP or local council immunisation service to arrange catch-up vaccination.

Once the child is up to date with vaccinations, they can request an updated Immunisation History Statement from the AIR.

The updated Immunisation History Statement showing that vaccines are 'up to date' needs to be provided by the parent/carer to your service to confirm enrolment.

How can parents/carers obtain an Immunisation History Statement if their child was vaccinated overseas?

Children who were vaccinated overseas must have their vaccine records assessed by a recognised immunisation provider. The immunisation provider may offer vaccination through a ‘catch-up schedule’ as required.

Once the child’s records have been reviewed and reported to the AIR, they can request an updated Immunisation History Statement from the AIR.

## About the support period

There are some children in the community whose parents/carers face difficulties accessing vaccinations and/or the required documentation to prove immunisation status.

Some parents/carers may be eligible to enrol and start their children at your early childhood education and care service under a 'support period' provision. During the 16 week support period, parents/carers are encouraged to bring their child's vaccinations up to date and/or obtain the required documentation.

Early childhood education and care services should support parents/carers of children who are not up to date with their vaccinations and provide relevant information, such as where they can access vaccinations. Resources are available from the Department of Health’s [Resources for No Jab, No Play](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/resources-for-no-jab-no-play) webpage <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/resources-for-no-jab-no-play> to support this process.

**Families who meet any of the following criteria are eligible for the support period:**

* **Evacuated children**
  + - * 1. Children evacuated following emergency (such as flood or fire)
* **Children in emergency care**
  + - * 1. Children in emergency care (for example, emergency foster care) under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
* **Children in the care of an adult who is not their parent**
  + - * 1. Children in the care of an adult who is not the child’s parent due to exceptional circumstances such as illness or incapacity
* **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Children**
  + - * 1. Children identified by their parents as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
* **Other children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage**
  + - * 1. Children who hold or whose parents hold a health care card, pension concession card, Veterans Affairs Gold or White card
        2. Children from a multiple birth of triplets or more
        3. Children who are refugees or asylum seekers
* **Children known to child protection services**
  + - * 1. Children who are on or who have been on a Child Protection Order
        2. Children in or who been in foster care or out-of-home care
        3. Children who have a report made about them under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005
        4. Families that have received support through [Family services](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/family-services) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/family-services> including ChildFIRST; Services Connect; a community-based child and family service; or an integrated family service.

How long is the support period?

The support period is for 16 weeks commencing from the date that the child first attends your service.

What needs to happen during the support period?

#### Early childhood education and care services

During the 16 week support period, you are required to take reasonable steps to obtain the required Immunisation History Statement from the AIR. See the [Resources for No Jab, No Play](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/resources-for-no-jab-no-play) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/resources-for-no-jab-no-play> for further guidance.

The Department of Health and Department of Education have developed resources to support early childhood education and care services to implement the support period provisions. This includes a [support period eligibility assessment form](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/formsandtemplates/grace-period-eligibility-assessment-form) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/formsandtemplates/grace-period-eligibility-assessment-form> as well as information to provide to parents/carers about where to access immunisation services.

#### Parents/carers

During the 16 week support period, parents/carers should endeavour to have their child vaccinated if required, and/or obtain the required Immunisation History Statement from the AIR and provide it to your service.

## When can an early childhood education and care service confirm an enrolment?

Having an application accepted or being registered on a waiting list for a place at your service is not a confirmed enrolment.

Confirmation of enrolment can be given by your service, no more than two months prior to the child first attending, only once the parent/carer has provided an Immunisation History Statement from the AIR to your service that shows that the child:

* is up to date with their immunisations (specifically, that no vaccines are overdue two months prior to the first day of attending; see [key dates work form](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/formsandtemplates/Key-dates-work-form-for-immunisation-and-enrolment) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/formsandtemplates/Key-dates-work-form-for-immunisation-and-enrolment>); OR
* has commenced a catch-up immunisation schedule that is displayed on their Immunisation History Statement from the AIR, AND
* has vaccine/s due on the catch-up schedule, that are not overdue two months prior to the first day of attending); OR
* has an immunisation medical exemption that prevents them from being fully immunised for their age; OR
* is eligible to enrol under the 16-week support period while your service works with the family to obtain the necessary immunisations/documentation.

An Immunisation History Statement from the AIR is the only accepted document for proving a child’s immunisation status, including that they are up to date, or have commenced a recognised catch-up schedule or have an immunisation medical exemption that prevents them from being fully immunised for their age.

Evidence required to qualify to enrol under the support period provision varies depending on the circumstances of the family. You should discuss the individual circumstances with the family.

## Immunisation after enrolment

Under Victorian legislation, parents/carers are required to continue to provide your service with evidence that their enrolled child is up to date with their immunisations.

Parents/carers will need to provide their child’s service with a new Immunisation History Statement whenever their child receives (or was due to receive) immunisation/s after enrolment or in response to a request from you.

This obligation applies to the parents/carers of children enrolled in early childhood education and care services.

**Why is this required?**

If there is a disease outbreak at your service, accurate and current evidence of immunisation is needed to identify children at risk (for example, children too young to be fully immunised against a disease) who may need to stay away from the service until it is safe for them to return.

The Victorian Government introduced this requirement to provide an important additional prompt to parents/carers regarding immunisation as part of a continued effort to improve and maintain high childhood immunisation rates and protect the community from vaccine-preventable diseases.

What does the early childhood education and care service do?

Throughout the time a child is attending, you are required to take reasonable steps to obtain up to date Immunisation History Statements from parents/carers and keep the latest statement with enrolment records. Reasonable steps include:

* Twice a year, requesting parents/carers provide an updated Immunisation History Statement to your service if their child has received or been due to receive a vaccination while attending
* Reviewing the enrolment records for some children whose parents/carers may be at greater risk of falling behind with their child's immunisations, and providing a follow up immunisation evidence request to parents/carers if necessary
* Assessing Immunisation History Statements to ensure they indicate the child is up to date with immunisations
* Supporting parents/carers to comply, by providing information or referral to support services.

## About vaccination

Why are vaccinations so important?

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways of preventing disease worldwide. Modern vaccines provide high levels of protection against an increasing number of diseases which, in some cases, can be fatal. Worldwide, it is estimated that immunisation programs prevent approximately 2.5 million deaths each year.

The current immunisation rate in Victoria for children under 5 years of age is around 95 per cent. This level of immunisation coverage is necessary to halt the spread of particularly virulent diseases such as measles. However, there is always more that can be done.

Immunisation not only protects those people who have been vaccinated, it also protects those in our community who may be unable to receive vaccines themselves, by reducing the prevalence and spread of disease.

Where can parents/carers access immunisation services?

Local council immunisation services (free service), GPs and community health services can provide immunisation services.

[Services and contacts for ‘No Jab, No Play’](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/services-and-contacts-for-no-jab-no-play) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/services-and-contacts-for-no-jab-no-play> may assist families to find additional support.

## About the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation

What is the objective of the ‘No Jab No Play’ legislation?

The purpose of the No Jab No Play legislation is to help increase immunisation rates for young children in the community.

The legislation is designed to:

* provide a prompt regarding immunisation for parents/carers enrolling their child in early childhood education and care services
* allow for children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to be able to access the lifelong benefits of early childhood education and care, while being supported to obtain vaccinations and/or required evidence of vaccination.

‘Conscientious objection’ to vaccines is not an exemption under the legislation.

Since the introduction of the legislation in 2016, immunisation coverage rates for young children have been steadily increasing in Victoria and are now at around 95 per cent.

Who does the ‘No Jab, No Play’ legislation impact and how?

The legislation applies to all early childhood education and care services[[1]](#footnote-2) in Victoria providing:

* long day care
* kindergarten (including three and four year old kindergarten)
* occasional care
* family day care.

The legislation does not apply to:

* enrolment in primary or secondary school
* children attending an outside school hours care service (after school care, before school care, vacation care)
* enrolments of school children in long day care, family day care or occasional care
* casual occasional care services that offer care of no more than two hours per day and no more than six hours per week (for example, crèches at gyms and shopping centres)
* services primarily providing instruction on particular activities (for example, sport, dance or music)
* services primarily provided or shared by family members of the children (and a family member is readily available and retains responsibility for the child).

Your service can assist families of children who aren't up to date with their vaccinations with support and information resources as to where they can access vaccinations.

How does the legislation work?

Anyone offering early childhood education and care services as defined under the [Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/012) <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/012> is required to be licensed by the Department of Education and Training. The maximum penalty for operating an unlicensed education and care service is $20,000 for an individual or $100,000 for a company or incorporated association.

Licensed services are subject to regular audit and are required to meet minimum standards in relation to staffing, premises and operational requirements to protect children's safety, health and wellbeing. This includes adhering to the 'No Jab, No Play' requirements, where applicable.

## Resources for early childhood education and care services

#### Immunisation enrolment resources

[Resources for No Jab No Play](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/resources-for-no-jab-no-play) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/resources-for-no-jab-no-play> have been designed to assist you with your legal responsibilities and immunisation record management under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation in Victoria.

#### Resources and templates

For enrolment

[Immunisation and enrolment decision aid](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/immunisation-and-enrolment-decision-aid)<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/immunisation-and-enrolment-decision-aid>: this flowchart outlines the steps required to make decisions in relation to immunisation status and enrolment.

[Key dates work form for immunisation and enrolment](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/key-dates-work-form-for-immunisation-and-enrolment)<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/key-dates-work-form-for-immunisation-and-enrolment>: this tool allows you to enter relevant dates pertaining to immunisation and enrolment to determine compliance with Victorian requirements.

[Parent/carer enrolment letter template](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/parent-enrolment-letter-template)<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/parent-enrolment-letter-template>: you can use this letter as a basis for correspondence with parent/carer seeking to finalise enrolment. Copy, download or adapt this letter to suit your service.

[Support period eligibility assessment form](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/grace-period-eligibility-assessment-form)<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/grace-period-eligibility-assessment-form>: use this assessment form to determine if a child who is not fully vaccinated can enrol and attend your service while the family seeks to obtain the required immunisation documents. This form is for use by you, in conversation with the parent. This is not a form for parents to complete on their own.

**After enrolment**

The [No Jab No Play for early childhood education and care services](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/after-enrolment-no-jab-no-play-requirements) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/after-enrolment-no-jab-no-play-requirements> webpage contains the following useful information:

[Immunisation evidence request decision aid flow chart](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/immunisation-evidence-request-decision-aid-flow-chart)<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/immunisation-evidence-request-decision-aid-flow-chart>: a handy reference that shows the pathways to follow when issuing requests to parents/carers to provide your service with evidence of up-to-date immunisation.

[Parent/carer initial immunisation evidence request text](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/initial-immunisation-evidence-request-text)<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/initial-immunisation-evidence-request-text>: this text can be adapted to suit your service and includes minimum suggested text and additional suggested text. The minimum suggested text is available for download in a range of languages.

[Parent/carer follow-up immunisation evidence request text](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/follow-up-immunisation-evidence-request-text) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/follow-up-immunisation-evidence-request-text>: this text can be adapted for delivery via your services' chosen method for privately providing a follow-up request to individual parent/carer for an up-to-date Immunisation History Statement**.**

[Scenarios for timing of immunisation evidence requests](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/scenarios-for-timing-of-immunisation-evidence-requests)<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/scenarios-for-timing-of-immunisation-evidence-requests>: this diagram shows two scenarios that you may find useful as a guide in determining when to issue requests for up-to-date Immunisation History Statements to parents.

[Text for your service's parent/carer manual](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/text-for-your-services-parents-manual)<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/text-for-your-services-parents-manual>: this text can be used or adapted for inclusion in information provided to parents/carers on enrolment. It provides information regarding the requirement for parents to continue to provide an up-to-date Immunisation History Statement if their child is due to receive vaccines while attending your service.

[Immunisation after enrolment fact sheet for parents/carers](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/immunisation-after-enrolment-fact-sheet-for-parents) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/immunisation-after-enrolment-fact-sheet-for-parents>: this fact sheet can be downloaded and provided to parents/carers who require or request additional information regarding providing evidence of current immunisation while their child is attending your service.

## More information

More about immunisation

[National Immunisation Program schedule](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-immunisation-program-schedule?language=en) <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-immunisation-program-schedule?language=en>

[Immunisation – childhood fact sheet](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/immunisation-childhood) <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/immunisation-childhood>

Access this factsheet online

[Resources for ‘No Jab, No Play’ (health.vic.gov.au)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/resources-for-no-jab-no-play) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/resources-for-no-jab-no-play>

View the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation

View the No Jab, No Play legislation online at [Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/public-health-and-wellbeing-amendment-no-jab-no-play-act-2015) <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/public-health-and-wellbeing-amendment-no-jab-no-play-act-2015>.

About Commonwealth 'No Jab, No Pay' initiative

For information about the Commonwealth Government No Jab No Pay legislation, call Parentline on 13 61 50, or visit [Parentline](https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/parentline) <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/parentline>.

To receive this publication email the Immunisation Program, Community and Public Health Division, Department of Health <immunisation@health.vic.gov.au>.

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Available at [Resources for ‘No Jab, No Play](Resources%20for%20‘No%20Jab,%20No%20Play)’ <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/resources-for-no-jab-no-play>

1. approved under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and licensed under the *Children’s Services Act 1996* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)