



Immunization Guidelines

For Child Care Facility Operators
& School Personnel

Georgia Department of Human Resources
Division of Public Health
Georgia Immunization Program
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www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us/programs/immunization/index.shtml

Georgia law and the rules of the Department of Human Resources require children attending day care and



school to be protected from certain vaccine preventable diseases.

The immunization requirements for childcare and school attendance are outlined

in the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231) and the Policy Guides 3231INS and 3231REQ. Childcare facilities, schools, health care providers, and parents are all responsible for seeing that these rules and laws are enforced. This booklet summarizes your responsibilities and provides guidelines to help your facility/school follow the rules and law.





Know and Follow the Immunization Requirements

Certificates

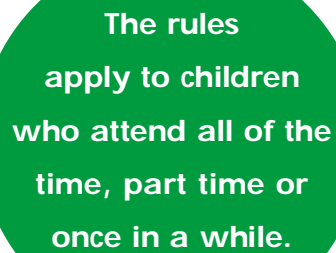
- **Each child** that attends a facility and/or school **must have on file a valid Certificate of Immunization or** a notarized statement that says immunizations are against the parent's religion. This notarized statement is called an **"Affidavit of Religious Exemption."**
- The rules apply to children who attend a facility and/or school all of the time, part time or once in a while.
- When a child first enrolls, the facility/school can allow the parent/guardian 30 calendar days to get a valid certificate or affidavit of religious exemption.
- After 30 days, the parents must give the school/daycare a Certificate of Immunization that has a current "Date of Expiration" or is "Complete for School Attendance."
- If the child drops out of school/daycare and is brought back, the parent does not get another 30 days to bring a certificate or affidavit.
- All students who will be entering the 6th grade in Georgia are required to show proof of measles and varicella immunity.
 - If a student is already enrolled in a school in Georgia, this immunity should be documented on a "Supplemental Vaccine Certification Form" (Form 3189), obtained from the child's physician or health department. This form should be given to the school to attach to the child's existing "Georgia Certificate of Immunization" (Form 3032).
 - If the student is entering 6th grade in a Georgia school system for the first time (ie: coming from out of state), this information, in addition to the other required vaccines, must be documented on the "Georgia Certificate of Immunization" (Form 3231).

Exemptions

- Georgia law allows for two types of exemptions from the immunization requirements: medical and religious.
 - A **medical exemption** must be marked on the Certificate of Immunization and must be reviewed by a physician once a year. This is indicated by the "Date of Expiration."
 - If there is a **religious exemption**, the parent /guardian must give the facility/school a signed and dated notarized statement or affidavit stating that immunizations are against their religious beliefs. This affidavit should be filed instead of the Certificate of Immunization. The affidavit does not expire.

Certificate Audits

- Local officials of the health department or school will perform a review of the immunization records for all five-year-old kindergarten students yearly in the fall.
- The facility/school must keep the Certificates or Affidavits at the facility/school, ready to show Health Officials during normal business hours. The daycare/school staff must help the health official in locating the immunization records to review.
- The immunization records of children enrolled in Headstart Programs, Four Year Old Pre-K Programs, and Day Care Facilities will be reviewed at least once a year by local health officials. Immunization records from church daycare programs and schools are also reviewed.
- A staff member from the Georgia Immunization Program will randomly review school immunization records yearly. This review includes records of 5 year old kindergarten students and students enrolled in sixth grade.



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Know and Follow the Immunization Requirements

Continued

- The following information is recorded from the records reviewed:
 - The number of children enrolled
 - The number of children who have valid current certificates
 - The number of children with expired certificates
 - The number of children with religious exemptions
 - The number of children with medical exemptions
- When the certificates are reviewed, at least 90% of children attending the facility must have current immunization certificates for the facilities/schools to meet the requirements of the law.
- Any Facility/School Official or any parent/guardian who deliberately fails to follow the above rules will be guilty of a misdemeanor and could be fined. The local health department has the authority to enforce this requirement.

2 Check Each Certificate

- The facility/school must check each child's certificate to be sure it is complete and current.
- The child's name, birth date and parent/guardian's name must be filled in.
- A certificate must be marked with a "Date of Expiration" **or** "Complete for School Attendance." It cannot be marked in both areas. The way the certificate is completed depends on the child's age and if the child needs more immunizations to meet the requirements or has a medical exemption.
- A **child under four years of age** must have a certificate with an "**Expiration Date**" entered by a doctor or health department staff. This date shows when the next immunization is due or a review of a medical exemption is due. (Dates that vaccines were given are not required for this age.)

3

Keep Certificates Organized and Current

- Childcare facilities/schools are responsible for setting up and keeping an organized system for filing immunization certificates and for making sure all certificates are current.

Organizing Certificates

- Keeping immunization certificates organized makes it easier for a facility/school to identify unprotected children in case there is a disease outbreak and prevent the spread of infection. It also provides a method for quickly reviewing records.
- **Any system that works is allowed as long as the required information can be easily located.** The Georgia Department of Human Resources recommends the use of a simple tickler filing system for keeping Certificates of Immunization current. The system allows you to easily identify certificates that will expire and notify the parents ahead of time. A simple tickler filing system for day care facilities and schools may be set up using the following examples

Sample Tickler Filing System Child Care Facilities

- Suggested materials needed:
 - A notebook that will hold 8.5"x11" paper
 - Index page dividers (approximately 17-20 dividers)
 - A current list of all children attending your daycare. This list must show where the child's immunization certificate can be found.
- **Organize the file:** File all certificates alphabetically in the correct section. Mark sections as follows.
 - Label the 1st index divider as "Action Pending." or need certificate file. *(Children who are newly enrolled to daycare may have 30 days to provide the day care with an immunization certificate. You should have the child's name and the date he enrolled in the facility entered in this file so you can be sure to obtain a certificate from the parents within 30 days. Those who have been notified by a letter that their certificate will expire within 30 days need to be filed in the Action Pending section also.)*
 - Label the 2nd divider as "Excluded from Attending" (for persons not allowed to attend until they bring a current certificate to the daycare/school).

- Label the 3rd-14th dividers as months of the year (January, February, etc.)

A certificate is filed under the month and year that it will expire or that a new certificate needs to be obtained. "Medical Exemptions" should be filed according to the month and year of expiration indicated on the certificate.

- Label the 15th divider as "Next Year **or** Later"
- Label the 16th divider as " Exempt" to include "Religious Affidavits"
- Label the 17th divider as "Complete for School"
Only children who are four years of age or older may have certificates filed in this section.
- You may choose to have extra dividers for "inactive" certificates or information, such as a copy of the law or rules.

For certificates to be valid they must be current. The facility is responsible for reviewing the files regularly each month.

Keep files current

- For certificates to be valid they must be **current**. To keep current certificates, the facility has the responsibility of reviewing the files regularly each month.
- At the beginning of every month, pull the certificates filed under that month, remind the parents that new certificates are due within 30 days of the "Expiration Date" written on the certificate and place the certificates which are about to expire under the section labeled "Action Pending." Make a note that you notified the parent/guardian, including the dates you spoke or gave the parents a letter requesting a certificate and any other comments.
- Routinely check the "Action Pending" section. Send home all children whose parents do not bring updated current certificates within 30 days of the expiration date and place their certificates under the "Excluded from Attending" file.
- At the beginning of each year, look at all certificates in the section labeled "Next Year or Later." Place those with expiration dates due within the current year in the section for the appropriate month. Leave the rest in the "Next Year or Later" section. Make sure that all certificates are from children who are currently attending your daycare.

Keep Certificates Organized *Continued*

- If a child leaves or transfers to another facility, the certificate should be given to the parent/guardian or sent to the new facility. If you must keep a copy of these certificates, file them in a folder labeled inactive.

Sample Tickler Filing System Schools

- **Suggested materials needed:**
 - A notebook that will contain:
 - ◆ A list of names and birth dates of students who have religious exemptions.
 - ◆ A list of names and birth dates for students who have certificates or 30-day waivers that will expire. The list should have the date of expiration next to the student's name. Use a pencil so this can be easily changed.
 - ◆ Index dividers to indicate calendar month and year of expiration.
- **Organize the file:** Review all immunization certificates, waivers, medical exemptions, and religious affidavits and process and file in the student's permanent record as follows:
 - Immunization certificates that are marked "Complete for School" may be filed immediately in the student's permanent record.
 - Religious Affidavits:
 - ◆ Student's name and birth date should be entered on a list of students who have a "Religious Exemption."
 - ◆ The religious affidavit should be placed in the student's permanent record.
 - Certificates marked with "Dates of Expiration" and "30 day waivers" granted by the school. (This includes students who have "Medical Exemptions" which are to be reviewed annually by the health care provider.)
 - Student's name and birth date should be listed in a recall file under the month and year of expiration — use pencil and these dates can be easily changed.
 - The certificate or 30 day waiver should be placed in the student's permanent record.

Keep files current

- At the beginning of each month, review the names of students listed in that month's recall file and notify the parents/guardians that a new certificate is due for their child within 30 days of the "Expiration Date" written on the certificate.
- Document that you notified the parent/guardian, including the dates of notification and any comments
- If a student does not bring a new certificate within 30 days after the expiration date, the child should be not be allowed to attend the school until a current certificate is submitted.
- If a student leaves or transfers to another school, the certificate should be given to the parent/guardian or sent to the new school.

At the beginning of each month, review the names of students listed in that month's recall file and notify the parents/guardians that a new certificate is due for their child within 30 days of the "Expiration Date."

4 Report the Occurrence of Any "Notifiable Disease"

Georgia law requires facilities/schools to report any suspected case of any of the notifiable diseases listed on the "Notifiable Disease List" produced by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health, Epidemiology Branch.

Resources

- Your Local Health Department
- Georgia Immunization Program
404-657-3158



Vaccines Protect Children from These Diseases

Diphtheria is a bacterium that causes a throat infection so bad a patient can't swallow or breathe. It can make a poison in the body that can cause heart failure or paralysis. The "D" part of the **DTaP**, DTP or Td vaccine protects against it.

Hepatitis type B is a virus that can cause liver damage. Many people who get it become lifelong carriers and can infect others. **Hepatitis B vaccine** protects against it.

Hib (*Haemophilus influenzae* type b) is a bacterium that causes meningitis, a swelling of the brain covering. It can also cause very bad throat or joint infections, pneumonia and hearing loss. **Hib vaccine** has been very successful in preventing this disease in young children.

Measles is a very contagious virus that causes a high fever and rash. It can lead to ear infections, pneumonia or swelling in the brain. The first "M" in the **MMR vaccine** protects against measles.

Mumps causes painful swelling around the cheeks and jaw. The virus can result in hearing loss or meningitis. The second "M" in the **MMR vaccine** protects children from mumps.

Pertussis (whooping cough) causes coughing spells so violent that a child can't breathe, eat or drink. The virus can lead to pneumonia, seizures or even a coma. The "P" part of the **DTaP** or DTP vaccine protects against whooping cough.

Polio is a virus that can paralyze people, make their muscles weak or cause them to need a machine to help them breathe. **IPV** or **OPV** (inactive [shot] or oral polio vaccines) protect against the disease.

Rubella (German Measles) can harm unborn babies early in pregnancy. The "R" in the **MMR** vaccine protects against rubella.

Tetanus (lockjaw) causes muscle spasms that can make it difficult to breathe or swallow. The bacteria get into the body through a wound. The "T" in **DTaP**, DTP or Td protects children. Everyone needs a tetanus booster every 10 years.

Varicella Zoster (chicken pox) is a virus that causes itching and blisters. It can be severe in some people and can lead to pneumonia or skin infections. **Varicella vaccine** was added as a requirement to attend day care and school in Georgia beginning August 1, 2000.

Pneumococcal disease causes bacterial meningitis (an infection of the brain), blood infections, and some types of ear infections. These infections can result in hearing loss, speech delays, paralysis, learning disabilities and even death. **Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine** is routinely recommended for children under 5 years of age but is not currently required for day care attendance.



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
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