

Immunization Policy Toolkit for Colorado Child Care Programs



Updated December 2021

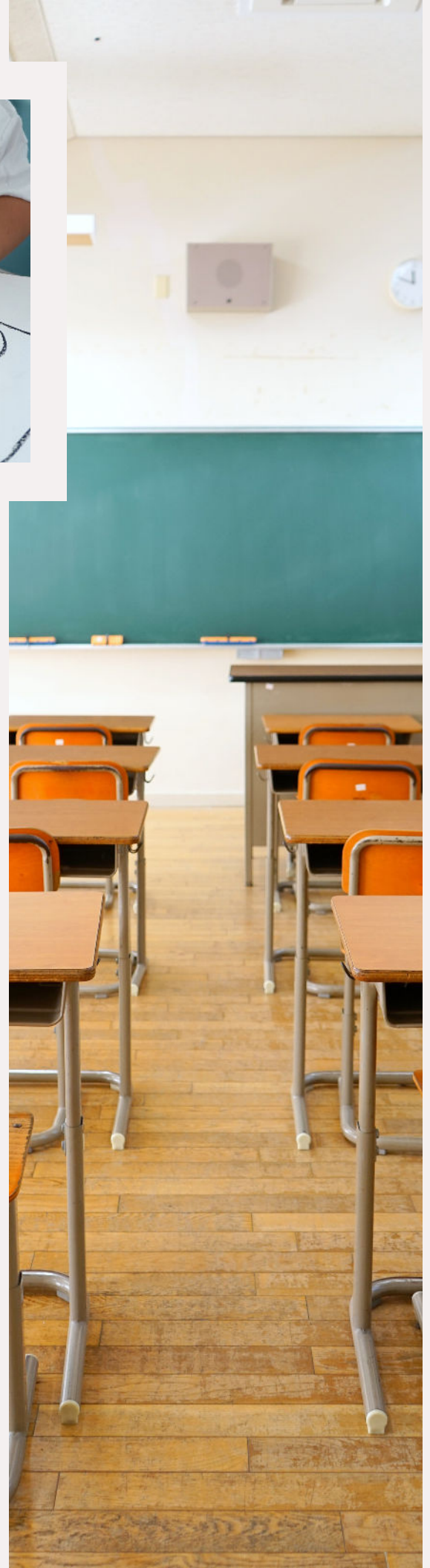


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Intro Letter

Dear Colorado Child Care Programs,

As many children return to school and child care settings, it's important to stay up to date on immunization requirements. Senate Bill 20-163 recently went into effect and impacts Colorado's school entry process. As of July 1, 2021, this new law is in effect and applies to students returning for the 2021-2022 school year. This new law creates a system for increased education for parents and caregivers seeking a nonmedical exemption from vaccines required for school entry. The measure also improves the tracking and reporting system for all immunizations.

In an effort to support you and help us all better understand this new process, we have created an Immunization Policy Toolkit, complete with:

- FAQs surrounding Senate Bill 20-163 and how it impact licensed child care programs,
- Immunization policy recommendations,
- Template policies and messaging for parents and caregivers, and
- Vaccine education resources

These templates and tools are for you to utilize and customize as helpful for your program and unique to your community. Our aim through this Immunization Policy Toolkit is to assist you in continued efforts to reach families whom you serve, help them understand the importance of vaccinations, and emphasize the role you play together in keeping students and schools safe and thriving.

With gratitude for all that you do for the children and families of Colorado,

Immunize Colorado

What is this toolkit for?

According to the most recently published Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) data, Colorado currently ranks 43rd out of 50 states for completion of recommended childhood vaccines by the time they are two. The Healthy People 2030 goal is to have 90% of children complete the recommended vaccine series by the time children are two years old – Colorado only has 64% complete by the age of two. There are many different ways to approach the issue of low vaccine rates: parents can be educated on vaccine schedules and the importance of staying up to date, providers can incorporate immunizations into regular wellness checks, and all licensed child care programs can implement comprehensive vaccination policies to protect the children in their care.

Child care facilities licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services include child care programs, school-age child care programs, preschools, day camps, resident camps, day treatment centers, family child care homes, foster care homes, and Head Start programs.

Immunize Colorado recently conducted an analysis in which they examined the current child care center vaccination policies in comparison with national contexts. This analysis found that only 19% of surveyed child care programs had a complete policy, meaning it detailed which immunizations were required, when they were required, how to submit information, consequences for non-compliance and information about exemptions. 41%, which covered almost 20,000 students, had no policy at all.

Another added layer of complexity is Senate Bill 20-163 that went into effect on July 1, 2021. This bill standardizes the vaccine exemption process and requires an equal effort requirement for those wishing to opt out of recommended childhood vaccines. The bill also establishes state-wide goals for vaccination rates (95%) that includes not only schools, but child care programs. In conjunction with the COVID-19 pandemic, comprehensive immunization policies are even more pressing.

With many different changes during this school year, this toolkit has been created to help child care programs implement comprehensive and compliant immunization policies.

Senate Bill 20-163: What does it mean for Licensed Child Care Programs?

Senate Bill 20-163 went into effect on July 1, 2021 and it applies to students during the 2021-2022 school year.

What's Changing?

- There is now an "equal effort" requirement for non-immunizing parents or guardians This requires:
 - Obtaining an immunizing provider's signature on an official state-developed Certificate of nonmedical exemption or
 - Completing the Online Immunization Education Module.
- All immunizing providers are required to report immunization and exemption data to the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS).
- Certificates of nonmedical exemption have changed and are now required for those claiming a nonmedical exemption. Training requirements are detailed below.

Specifically, the new bill:

- Preserves the nonmedical exemption option, so parents with deeply held beliefs are not required to vaccinate, but do have to file an exemption at 2, 4, 6, 12 and 18 months of age with their child's school. Once a child turns 18 months of age and a Certificate of nonmedical exemption is in place, another exemption will not be required until the child enters Kindergarten. Certificates of nonmedical exemption are then due annually, K through 12th grade.
- Consolidates personal belief and religious exemptions into a single nonmedical exemption category.
- Changes existing practice to require the use of a single, state-developed certificate when electing either a medical or nonmedical exemption. An option to the state-developed Certificate of nonmedical exemption is the parent/guardian reviewed Online Immunization Education Module that, when completed, produces a certificate that does not require an immunizing provider's signature.

- Changes existing practice to require the use of a single, state-developed certificate when electing either a medical or nonmedical exemption. An option to the state-developed Certificate of nonmedical exemption is the parent/guardian reviewed Online Immunization Education Module that, when completed, produces a certificate that does not require an immunizing provider's signature.
- Requires all immunizing health care providers to report both immunizations and exemptions to the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS).
- Establishes a statewide vaccination goal of 95 percent for all children, for all school-required vaccines, including child care facilities and provides additional resources to help schools and communities reach this goal.
- Requires schools to proactively notify parents of their annual school measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) immunization rates, at a minimum.

Things licensed child care programs will want to keep in mind:

Certificates of nonmedical exemption have changed and are now required for those claiming a nonmedical exemption.

- They have been standardized to include the collection of information necessary in the event of a disease outbreak. Certificates of nonmedical exemption expire on June 30 each year. Parents or guardians seeking nonmedical exemptions must have a new certificate signed, and file this new certificate each year for children in kindergarten and older, just as immunizing parents and caregivers file updated vaccination records at the start of each school year.
- Parents of students in preschool or child care who choose to claim a nonmedical exemption must submit it at 2, 4, 6, 12, and 18 months of age. These exemptions expire when the next vaccines are due or when the child enrolls in kindergarten.

This toolkit is meant to help you address the requirements put forth in this law. In the next few sections you can find FAQs, policy recommendations and templates for your licensed child care program, outreach material and more resources!



Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find the new certificates of medical and non-medical exemption?

For medical and nonmedical exemptions to be valid, patients must have the appropriate state-issued certificate completed. Links to both documents are provided below:

- [Certificates of medical exemption](#) ([English](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Arabic](#), [Korean](#), [Chinese](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#))
- [Certificates of nonmedical exemption](#) ([English](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Arabic](#), [Korean](#), [Chinese](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#))

Does this law apply to child care programs?

Yes! This law applies to students attending child care facilities licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services including child care programs, school-age child care programs, preschools, day camps, resident camps, day treatment centers, family child care homes, foster care homes, and Head Start programs. It also applies to students attending public, private and parochial kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools through 12th grade, colleges or universities. [See here for a list of vaccines required for child care and school entry.](#)

Where can I find the online education module for parents seeking an exemption?

The [online immunization education module](#) can be accessed at the link below. After the completion of the module, the user will be able to complete an electronic form to obtain a Certificate of nonmedical exemption. This form can be completed for more than one child without having to retake the course.

Online immunization education module:
<https://www.dcpapps.dphe.state.co.us/storyline360/story.html>



Policy Recommendations



Comprehensive child care program immunization policies should address the following areas:

Which immunizations are required to attend?

- Hepatitis B
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTap)
- Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib)
- Inactivated poliovirus (IPV)
- Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Varicella (chicken pox)

Please note that these are the minimum requirements for attending. Private child care programs may require additional vaccines.

CDPHE's Child Care Immunization Chart can be found [here](#).

When are the immunizations required?

- In this section, it's important to provide a due date for vaccination records or exemption records for parents/guardians.
- If parents have questions about which vaccines are needed based on their child's age, the CDC's Immunization Schedule can be referenced:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/child-adolescent.html>

Policy Recommendations

How do parents/guardians submit immunization records?

- In this section, it's important to be clear on how you'd like for parents/guardians to submit proof of immunization or Certificates of medical or nonmedical exemption
- Examples:
 - Submit documents via email at EXAMPLE@EMAIL.com
 - Upload documents to the child care center portal at LINK
 - Bring paper records to the child care center admin office at LOCATION

What are the consequences for not submitting immunization records?

- In order to ensure compliance, it's best to set deadlines and clear guidelines for the required paperwork. If parents/guardians fail to provide documentation by your listed due date, the school-immunization law will not permit the child to attend the child care center until sufficient documentation is provided.

Are exemptions to immunizations available?

- In this section, the Colorado state requirements for medical and nonmedical exemptions should be referenced.

Template Policy

[Child Care Center Name] Immunization Policy
[Date]

Colorado law states that all children attending a licensed child care center must be vaccinated against certain illnesses, unless a Certificate of medical or nonmedical exemption is filed through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)'s exemption process.

As a licensed child care center, [Child Care Center Name] requires that one of the following be submitted to [EMAIL or PORTAL LINK] by [DATE]. Colorado school-required law allows an "in-process" period where the parent/guardian has 14 days from the date of the school's notification to submit the student's immunization record, a plan to catch up on missing required immunizations following ACIP/CDC's minimum intervals between doses of vaccine or a Certificate of medical or nonmedical exemption. If proper documentation is not provided by [DATE], the student will not be permitted to attend [Child Care Center Name] until documentation is submitted and approved.

What can be submitted to fulfill this requirement?

Immunization Certificate

- The Colorado Certificate of Immunization can be found [here](#) and must be signed by an immunizing provider or a school health authority who can review the record for accuracy. Vaccinations should follow the recommendations set by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, which can be found [here](#).

Medical Exemption

- If a medical exemption is being submitted for the student, the [Certificate of Medical Exemption](#) must be signed by a physician (MD, DO), Advanced Practice Nurse (APN), or Physician Assistant (authorized pursuant to section 12-240-107 (6), C.R.S)

Nonmedical Exemption

- If a nonmedical exemption is being submitted for the student, the [Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption](#) must be signed by a Physician (MD, DO), Advanced Practice Nurse (APN), Physician Assistant, Registered Nurse (RN) or pharmacist and submitted.
- Nonmedical exemptions must be submitted at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 12 months and 18 months.
 - Submission must include the Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption WITH a signature from an immunizing provider, OR
 - File the Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption received upon the completion of our online immunization education module
- The module for nonmedical exemptions can be found [here](#)
- Please note that parents of students in grades K-12 claiming a nonmedical exemption must submit one annually. Nonmedical exemptions expire June 30th each year. If you submit a Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption on or before June 30th, it will not be valid for the upcoming school year unless you submit the exemption during early registration. More information on vaccine exemptions can be found on the CDPHE website [here](#).

Want to see how [Child Care Center Name] is doing? Check out vaccination rates [here](#).

[Download this template here to use for your child care program!](#)



Template Letter to Parents

Dear parents and guardians at [Child Care Program Name],

Your child's safety is our top priority! As we strive to continue the highest quality of care for all children at [Child Care Program Name], we've updated our Immunization Policy to align with Colorado state requirements.

At a glance, there are now specifics about what is required for vaccine documentation, when it's due, how to submit it, the penalty for lack of documentation, and exemption details. Please read the full new policy [here!](#)

Let us know if you have any questions at all.

Best,

[Name]

[Download this template here to use for your child care program!](#)

Social Media Assets

REMINDER!

Submit your child's required immunization records to your child care program!



UPDATE!

Check out the new immunization policies that have been put into place to protect your children.



Which immunizations are required for child care entry?

- Hepatitis B
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTap)
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- Inactivated poliovirus (IPV)
- Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Varicella (chicken pox)



How's your child care program doing?

Is your child care program implementing all recommended immunization policies?



Download these social media assets [here!](#)

Vaccine Education Resources

For child care centers

[Certificate of Immunization for Co](#) - Recommended & Required Vaccines

[CDPHE Immunization Chart](#) - Vaccines Required for Child Care Entry

[Flowchart of Colorado immunization law](#) - Resource for Child Care Centers

[CDPHE vaccine education materials](#) - Resource for Child Care Centers

[FAQs on Immunizations](#) - Resource for common question from guardians

[CDPHE FAQs on Vaccines required for child care programs](#) - Resource for Child Care Centers

For the community

[Immunize For Good](#) - Resources for the Community

[Senate Bill 20-163](#) - School Entry Immunization resource for the community

[CIIS opt out procedures](#) - Instructions for guardians

[Online Immunization Education Module](#) - Required for parents requesting a nonmedical exemption for their child

[Certificate of medical exemption form](#) & [Certificate of nonmedical exemption form](#)

[Vaccine Education Center at CHOP](#) - Vaccine & Vaccine Safety Q&A Sheets

For parents & guardians

[Immunize Colorado](#) - Resources for Parents & Families

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#) - Resources for Communications with Families about Immunizations

[Immunization Action Coalition](#) - Vaccine Information for Parents

[Boost Oregon](#) - Understanding Your Child's Vaccines

[CDPHE Child Care parent letter](#) - Welcome back letter for parents

[Infectious Disease Guidelines](#) - Guidance for Child Care Providers

[School Required Vaccines](#) - CDPHE list for guardians

[CIIS Opt Out Procedures](#) - Instructions for guardians

[Online Immunization Education Module](#) - Required for parents requesting a nonmedical exemption for their child

thank you!



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