

Parents and carers Frequently Asked Questions

What has changed?

Following changes to the South Australian Public Health Act 2011 (the Act), from 7 August 2020, children will not be able to enrol in or attend early childhood services unless all immunisation requirements are met.

The Act states:

- > an early childhood service must not enrol a child if all immunisation requirements are not met
- > a child cannot attend, or continue to attend, an early childhood service if all immunisation requirements are not met
- > early childhood services must keep a current copy of an approved immunisation record for each child enrolled in, or attending that service, and
- > approved immunisation records must be supplied by parents/guardians to the early childhood service at specified times.

What does 'all immunisation requirements' refer to?

The National Immunisation Program (NIP) provides funded vaccines at specific ages to babies, toddlers, teenagers and adults who have a Medicare card.

The [NIP – South Australian Schedule](#) tells you at what age certain vaccines must be administered to your child. These are called schedule points.

Vaccines must be administered on, or close to, the specific schedule points for your child to be considered **up to date** with their immunisations; usually a few days before or a few weeks after is acceptable.

Vaccines that are administered under the NIP are recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Unless your child has an approved exemption, if your child has not received all of their scheduled vaccines at the specific schedule points or as per a recognised catch-up schedule, then the AIR records your child as being 'not up to date'.

What is a catch-up schedule?

A child is registered for a catch-up schedule on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) when they have missed some vaccines as per the National Immunisation Program (NIP) schedule.

If the child's immunisation history statement indicates the child is on a catch-up schedule then the child is eligible to attend the service. A child can only be registered as being on an approved catch-up once.

What are 'approved immunisation records'?

For most children an approved immunisation record will be an '[immunisation history statement](#)' which is downloaded from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

The immunisation history statement is an official record of immunisations given to your child, and it will also indicate if your child has any approved exemptions.

The immunisation history statement will show:

- > your child's name
- > date of birth
- > the date the statement was downloaded, and
- > immunisation status, this may indicate:
 - up to date
 - not up to date; or
 - on a catch-up schedule.

Refer to the resource [AIR Immunisation History Statement Examples](#) for further information.

In very rare circumstances, a certificate from the Chief Public Health Officer or a document approved by the Chief Public Health Officer may be accepted.

A letter from a GP, an overseas immunisation record or the South Australian Child Health and Development Record (the "Blue Book") are not considered approved immunisation records.

What are the approved exemptions from meeting all immunisation requirements?

There are two processes that enable exemption from meeting all immunisation requirements. They are:

1. the Commonwealth Government's legislation, *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*, referred to as *No Jab No Pay*, and
2. the South Australian *Public Health Act 2011*, referred to as *No Jab, No Play*.

What are the approved No Jab No Pay exemptions?

'No Jab No Pay' legislation approves these exemptions:

- > the child has a medical contraindication to a vaccine, such as anaphylaxis
- > the child has natural immunity to a particular disease
- > the child is part of an approved vaccine study
- > the vaccine is temporarily unavailable
- > the child is vaccinated overseas*, or
- > the Secretary (see below) has determined that the child meets the immunisation requirements.

These exemptions are applied through the Commonwealth Medicare system. They are usually applied by the child's medical practitioner and reflected on the child's immunisation history statement.

Parents and guardians will need to speak with their medical practitioner about whether exemptions to being vaccinated are to be considered valid.

*A child vaccinated overseas will not automatically be granted an exemption; the overseas schedule for which that child was vaccinated will need to meet Australian immunisation schedule requirements. An [immunisation provider](#) will need to assess if this meets the Australian requirements and enter all doses administered overseas into the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Further information regarding exemptions and the process to apply for exemptions is detailed on the Commonwealth Government's Department of Social Services [Family Assistance Guide, Immunisation – approved exemptions](#) webpage.

What is a Secretary's exemption?

The [Family Assistance \(Meeting the Immunisation Requirements\) Principles 2015](#) set out the circumstances under which Secretary of the Commonwealth Government's Department of Social Services can determine that an individual has met the immunisation requirements for family assistance payments set out in the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*.

Clinical experts have determined that there are a small number of individuals who do not meet the criteria for medical exemptions as set out in the Australian Immunisation Handbook, but for whom the risks of physical harm are greater than the benefits and a process has been developed to be able to apply for an exemption.

As an example, a child with autism might require general anaesthetic to be vaccinated.

An exemption is granted if:

- a. a *listed* medical practitioner has certified in writing that immunisation of the child would result in an unacceptable risk of physical harm to the child or a person administering a vaccination to the child; and
- b. the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer has certified in writing that he or she agrees with the listed medical practitioner.

The listed Medical Practitioners in South Australia are specific doctors that provide specialist immunology services and the Women's and Children's Hospital [Specialist Immunisation Service Clinic](#). A GP referral is required to attend this clinic.

What are the South Australian Chief Public Health Officer exemptions for No Jab No Play?

- > children aged less than 7 months of age are exempt from the legislation;
- > Children that attend an individual or approved provider who is eligible for the additional child care subsidy ACCS (child wellbeing) with respect to that child are exempt from the legislation;
- > children who live or reside in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands: or within the Oak Valley community; or within the Yalata community are exempt from the legislation;
- > children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent a temporary exemption of six weeks will apply

Early childhood services and immunisation requirements

- > as children come under the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection as per the Children and *Young People (Safety) Act 2017* a temporary exemption of six weeks will apply;
- > as children transfer from the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection pursuant to the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* to another guardian or to their parent, a temporary exemption of six weeks will apply.

In special circumstances, the South Australian Chief Public Health Officer may grant an exemption.

These exemptions may be;

- > in relation to a specified child or a group of children; or
- > in relation to specified early childhood services or early childhood services of a specified group.

These exemptions may be subject to;

- > conditions as the Chief Public Health Officer thinks fit, and
- > for a specified period and vary according to the circumstances for which it applies.

To apply for an exemption an exemption application must be completed using the SA Health Chief Public Health Officer Immunisation Exemption Application Form.

An exemption request must be for reasons not listed on the [Commonwealth Government's Department of Social Services Approved Immunisation Exemptions](#) as applied through the Commonwealth Governments legislation, *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*.

The application, along with any supporting documentation must be emailed to: Health.NJNPExemptions@sa.gov.au

When do approved immunisation records need to be supplied?

A current approved immunisation record needs to be supplied:

- > at the time of enrolment
- > after your child turns 7 months of age but before they turn 9 months of age
- > after your child turns 13 months of age but before they turn 15 months of age
- > after your child turns 19 months of age but before they turn 21 months of age

- > after your child turns 4 years and 2 months of age but before they turn 4 years and 8 months of age.

Records must be provided at these times to show your child is up to date with all immunisations and the immunisations have been provided at the correct schedule points.

If a child enrolls in a service in between these specified times, then the record must be extracted no earlier than one month prior to that enrolment.

How do I check if my child's immunisation record, exemption notice or certificate is current?

An immunisation record provided to the early childhood service must:

- at the time of enrolment, be downloaded no earlier than one month prior to enrolment; and
- be downloaded within the specified age ranges (for example after the child turns 7 months of age but before the child turns 9 months of age); and
- in the case of a document approved by the Chief Public Health Officer, or a certificate in writing issued by the Chief Public Health Officer, be provided within the validity period of that document or certificate.

Your child's immunisation history statement must be downloaded at the correct ages and will indicate at the top of the statement when it was downloaded. It will say "As at:"

Schedule	Date given	Immunisation	Brand name given
2 months	03 Jan 2019	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Polio Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
4 months	18 Mar 2019	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Polio Pneumococcal Rotavirus	Infanrix Hexa Prevenar 13 Rotarix
6 months	23 May 2019	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Polio	Infanrix Hexa

Next immunisation/s due	Date due
Measles Mumps Rubella	01 Nov 2019
Meningococcal ACWY	01 Nov 2019
Pneumococcal	01 Nov 2019

Currency of immunisation record – the day the statement was downloaded from AIR

Who must supply immunisation records?

The parent or legal guardian must supply the early childhood service with the approved immunisation records for their child.

What if my child's immunisation record is from overseas?

Overseas immunisation records need to be added to the Australian Immunisation Register by your [immunisation service provider](#).

Some records may require translation before they can be added to the Australian Immunisation Register.

For immunisation records that require translation complete the [Australian Government Free Translating Services application](#). The Free Translating Service can be used by most permanent and some temporary residents. All fields must be completed in English. If you require an interpreter to complete the application, contact the National Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450**.

If you are not eligible for the Free Translating Service, there are a number of accredited translator or interpreter services available. Visit the [National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters](#) web page to locate a service.

You will need to take a translated copy of the child's immunisation records to an immunisation provider.

What if my child is not eligible for a Medicare card?

Children can still be added to the Australian Immunisation Register even if they do not have a Medicare card.

An AIR registration file is created when a vaccination record is notified to AIR, such as the overseas immunisation records being added to the AIR by an [immunisation service provider](#).

Individuals who are not registered on Medicare need to have a registration record created on AIR prior to immunisation providers being able to view the immunisation history on the AIR site.

Individuals who do not have a Medicare card can ring the Australian Immunisation Register and request an Immunisation history statement and it will be posted to them.

An immunisation provider may also print the Immunisation history statement for them from the AIR site, as long as the AIR record has been created.

If the child does not have a Medicare card, and the child is not up to date with all immunisation requirements, parents may have to pay for any vaccinations that are still required.

How do I get an immunisation history statement?

Immunisation history statements can be accessed by:

- > [Medicare online account through myGov](#)
- > [Express Plus Medicare mobile app](#) (through an existing myGov account)
- > Contacting the Australian Immunisation Register general enquiries line on **1800 653 809** and requesting a statement be mailed out.

The [How do I get an Immunisation history? – Guide](#) outlines the process.

If I have questions about my child's immunisation history statement, who should I ask?

It is recommended that you speak with your [immunisation provider](#), such as your local doctor or local council immunisation clinic.

Early childhood services are only responsible for collecting immunisation records and are not required to interpret the records.

What is an early childhood service?

For the purposes of this legislation, an early childhood service is a service that provides the education and/or care of children under the age of 6 years, such as childcare, family day care, occasional care, pre-school, kindergarten and early learning centres, including early childhood services provided at primary school sites.

Services such as primary education, babysitting, playgroups, childminding, or services comprising out of school care are excluded from the legislation.

What will the early childhood service do with this information?

Early childhood services are required to keep immunisation records for each child in their care. It is important that these records are current.

If there is a risk of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease in the service, staff may be asked to provide current information on each child's immunisation status to the Chief Public Health Officer (or delegate).

These will be used to determine which children (if any) need to be excluded from the service, because they will be at risk of getting the vaccine preventable disease.

For further information:

- > Australian Immunisation Register general enquiries line: **1800 653 809**
- > humanservices.gov.au
- > sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisation

For more information

Immunisation Section
Communicable Disease Control Branch
Telephone: 1300 232 272
sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisation

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