

Pediatric Clinician Guidance on Required Immunizations

Improving School Enrollment & Vaccine Uptake in Illinois

As a pediatrician, you play a crucial role in helping students and families prepare for school, at every stage of growth. This includes ensuring children are up to date with their required immunizations at the following times:

- ▶ Childcare, Preschool, Early Childhood, & Pre-K Programs
- ▶ Kindergarten (entry to school)
- ▶ 6th Grade (entry to middle school)
- ▶ 12th Grade (high school senior)

Please note: Certificate of Child Health Examination forms must have a clinician's (MD, DO, PA, APRN) signature for verification. Full, printed vaccine records may be turned in with the form.

Religious Exemption forms must be signed by the same clinician who completes the Certificate of Child Health Examination form.



Aligning with School Leadership

Schools are required, by law, to receive documentation of immunizations around the start of the school year. To help drive awareness and compliance, work to align your patient outreach strategy with the school year:

All Year

Encourage vaccines at every well-child visit. Remember, vaccinations for the upcoming school year can be completed up to one year before the start of the school year for which they are required.

January–March

Work with your staff and schools in your community to create a plan for back-to-school vaccine messaging and scheduling.

March–May

Identify any patients that may be falling behind on their immunizations and remind them that summer break is a great time to catch up. Start scheduling summer break appointments to optimize your schedule.



Tip: Use your EMR to run a reminder/recall report to identify patients who are due or falling behind on their immunizations.

May–August

Be sure to discuss required immunizations and offer to schedule an appointment for their Certificate of Child Health Examination.



Tip: Keep copies of the Certificate of Child Health Examination form in your office for parents and guardians and incorporate them into your online forms wherever possible.

August–October

Remind all patients and their families of the deadline for required immunizations and continue to encourage vaccination.



Tip: Consider sending out a text or online message about scheduling required vaccines for the upcoming school year.

October–December

Help families who have missed the deadline catch up on required and recommended immunizations.



Tip: Remember to provide updated records to patients so they can submit their documentation.

Quick Talking Points to Share with Parents & Guardians

- ▶ Proof of immunizations is required to begin pre-K, kindergarten, 6th grade, 9th grade, and for any transfer students in Illinois.
- ▶ Students without proof of immunizations shall be excluded from school until they fulfill the requirements*.
- ▶ Vaccines help prevent serious diseases and help make communities healthier.
- ▶ Send families to the American Academy of Pediatrics website: HealthyChildren.org to learn more about vaccines and other health-related topics.

**Unless they have a documented exemption or proof of a planned catch-up schedule.*

Together, we can help all of Illinois' children achieve more!