

Ways Your Early Childhood Program Can Support Immunization (Part 1)

Immunizations recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) help protect infants and young children from 14 diseases, such as whooping cough, that can be very serious or even deadly. Outbreaks of whooping cough, measles, and chicken pox in childcare settings occur each year in the US.

“By keeping children healthy and decreasing the chances of outbreaks, immunizations can help early childhood programs create a safe environment for children,” said Dr. Nancy Messonnier, Director of CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. “This not only applies to child care settings, but also to programs in home settings, where infants and young children can be exposed to diseases through family and friends.”

Here are five ways that you can support on-time immunization of infants and young children in your early childhood program:

1. Ensure that children in your program are vaccinated according to CDC’s recommended schedule and meet NH child care vaccine requirements. A list of NH childcare vaccine requirements can be found at <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/ccproviders.htm>
2. Ensure that staff are also vaccinated, so that they don’t spread a disease to the children in your program. It’s especially important for staff to be up to date on pertussis, measles, and flu shots.
3. Promptly notify the NH Bureau of Infectious Diseases if any child in your program develops a notifiable vaccine-preventable disease. A list of notifiable diseases can be found at <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/documents/reportablediseases.pdf>
4. Parents may seek your advice on health and safety issues, especially if their child does not have a regular primary care provider. Provide staff with basic information about the childhood immunization schedule and the benefits and safety of vaccination. Incorporate this information into your training and professional development. See the NH Immunization Program’s Child Care Provider’s Guide to Immunizations: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/documents/ccp-guide-imm.pdf>
5. Educate families about vaccine-preventable diseases and the importance of on-time immunization. There are many ways to do this and tips and resources will be provided in the next newsletter!

For information, questions, and resources contact the NH Immunization Program at 603-271-3572 or visit our website at <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/>