



IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

Organizations are now asked to communicate with local public health authorities to identify local expectations for immunization, and determine how to help newcomer parents understand what immunization is and why it is important. Organizations must explain local expectations for immunization to parents and tell them how they can access community resources to ensure their children's immunization status is up-to-date by Canadian standards. Parents of children attending long-term care must still be informed of the importance of bringing any record of immunization to the CNC program to be kept on file.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A goal of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is to ensure all newcomers to Canada have up-to-date immunizations that meet Canadian standards. Achieving that goal can be difficult.

Parents may not understand the importance of immunization. Even if they are familiar with immunization or they or their children have been immunized, they must recognize that immunization requirements differ from country to country and, in Canada, from one province/territory to another. It is, therefore, important for them to become familiar with immunization expectations for where they are living. Immunization is an issue for all Canadians, not just newcomers. Many childhood illnesses have been eradicated in Canada through immunization. In supporting the immunization of newcomers, ISOs are helping to protect all Canadians from the spreading of vaccine preventable disease.

When you help parents understand immunization, it also helps them to be better prepared for when the child enrolls in school and a record of immunization may be required.

IMPLEMENTATION

Consult with your local public health office to get the most appropriate information about immunization for newcomer families,

Find out as much as you can about the level of understanding and attitudes to immunization among the newcomers you serve. Use that information to develop ways to explain immunization simply so



that parents will understand.

Consult with your staff to decide the best strategies for introducing the topic to your families. Often, you will choose more than one way. Possibilities include posters on the wall, handouts for parents to take home, face-to-face conversations or interviews, or speaker sessions led by health professionals.

Establish a positive relationship with your public health office and keep in touch. Ask for new information whenever it appears, and welcome health authorities when they visit.

Special Information about Long Term Care

When you offer Long Term care, you must collect and record information about each child's immunization status. Use advice from your public health office to develop written procedures for documenting a child's immunization information (4-6). This information must be on file within two weeks after a child starts receiving care and be updated as necessary (1-2.g and h).

This information might be collected in the form of a record of the child's immunization in Canada, or possibly information that indicates a plan to seek immunization with an associated timeline. This file might also include a record of immunization from their home country.

Since immunization is a process that occurs over time, all children will not be completely immunized after one visit to a health professional. It is good to remind parents of the need to complete the immunization process and ask, from time to time, how their child's immunization is progressing and for any new records they might have received.

Special Information about Short Term Care

When children are participating in Short Term Care, most will not be in the program long enough to provide information about their immunization status. Your staff will not have an opportunity to track their progress toward immunization. However, the likelihood of exposure is reduced since children will not be in repeated contact with others over an extended period of time. You can best help these children and families by ensuring appropriate information is available and your staff have the knowledge they need to help parents understand immunization and take steps to protect their children.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

WEB RESOURCES

- Parents guide to immunization - <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/iyc-vve/pgi-gpv/index-eng>.



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- Immunization Schedule Creator - <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/iyc-vve/is-cv-eng.php>
- Immunization Protects Children Pamphlet - http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/publications/13002_ImmunizationProtectsChildrenPamphlet_En.pdf

REQUIREMENTS

4–6 Immunization

- a. The SPO provides parents with information about immunization.
- b. When providing a long term CNC to a child, the SPO follows written procedures developed with advice from the local public health office for documenting the child's immunization information.