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Dear Service Provider

Every day immunisation saves lives and makes it possible for Victorians to live free from illness and disability caused by many infectious diseases.

Immunisation not only protects those people who have been vaccinated, but it also protects those in the community who may be unable to receive vaccines themselves, by reducing the prevalence and spread of disease.

Victoria's childhood vaccination rates are excellent, with 92 per cent of children aged five years and under being fully vaccinated for their age. However, to achieve protection for the community as a whole from particularly virulent vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, a vaccination rate of 95 per cent is required.

The Andrews Labor Government is currently undertaking a range of strategies to boost vaccination rates. One of these strategies is the introduction of legislation, known as 'No Jab No Play', which will require children to be fully vaccinated before they can commence at early childhood education and care services (excluding outside school hours care).

The No Jab No Play law will recognise that there are a number of vulnerable children in the community whose families face difficulties accessing immunisations. The law will allow vulnerable children to be enrolled. Early childhood services will be provided with information to assist parents to access immunisations and obtain the necessary documentation within 16 weeks of commencing at the service.

We are committed to using our early childhood services to ensure children start their educational journey as healthy as they can be. The proposed bill strikes the right balance between preventing serious illnesses in children and recognising their right to a high quality early education.

The proposed law is designed to provide parents/carers with a reminder point and additional motivation to keep their children's vaccinations up to date. We see the proposed law as an opportunity for our early childhood education staff to partner with families in relation to their child's immunisations.

The new law will be considered by Parliament towards the end of the year and with a view to commencing from 1 January 2016.

Children attending your service prior to the legislation coming in to effect will not be impacted.

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We ask that, in the coming months before the legislation comes into effect, you inform parents/carers wanting their children to commence at your service in 2016 to avoid potential delay in enrolment by ensuring their child's vaccinations are up to date or they have a medical exemption.

Information for parents who may be affected is attached.

Be assured that this letter is the first in a range of communications and support that will be forthcoming to your service, and to Victorian parents, prior to and during the introduction of the law. We wish to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff in anticipation of your support and assistance to implement this important initiative to keep children safe from preventable disease.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Mikakos MP
Minister for Families & Children
Minister for Youth Affairs

17 / 08 / 2015



Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Minister for Health

17 / 08 / 2015

Information for parents - No Jab No Play

Proposed change to laws regarding immunisation and enrolling in early childhood services

The Andrews Labor Government made an election commitment to introduce a law that restricts enrolment in childcare and kindergarten to children who are fully immunised or have a medical reason that they can't be immunised. The law is yet to pass through Parliament, so implementation details are not finalised.

However, parents wishing to enrol their children in an early childhood service, may wish to know:

- The law is designed to increase immunisation rates amongst young children in the community, to provide maximum protection from vaccine-preventable diseases.
- The proposed laws are likely to come in to effect on 1 January 2016.

From this time, a child's enrolment at an early childhood service won't be confirmed unless their vaccinations are up to date or they have a medical exemption.

The documentation likely to be required as evidence of up-to-date vaccination will be an Australian Childhood Immunisation Register Immunisation History Statement provided by Medicare.

You will need to provide the statement to the service as part of the enrolment process.

The statement will need to show that the child's immunisations are up to date for their age on the date that they will begin attending the service.

If you are having problems accessing vaccination services or getting the required documentation, there will be an opportunity during the enrolment process to discuss that with your early childhood service provider.

Immunisation History Statements can be requested at any time contacting Medicare:

- phone 1800 653 809 or email acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au
- web: www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online
- visit your local Medicare Office.

If a child has a medical reason that they cannot be vaccinated, an Immunisation Exemption Medical Contraindication form will need to be obtained from Medicare (available for download from www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online), signed by a GP, and provided to the service.

If your child is not up to date with their vaccinations see your doctor or local council to discuss a catch-up schedule of vaccinations.

Local councils run immunisation sessions where vaccines are provided free to children. Alternatively, GPs or immunisation nurses can provide the vaccines.

If you have questions or concerns regarding immunisation or vaccines consult your doctor or an immunisation nurse.

To view the immunisation schedule (what vaccines are due at what age) go to www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au and search 'immunisation', or speak to your doctor.