



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

# Safe and Healthy Children: A Public Health Resource Manual for Child Care Providers





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# Immunizations and Other Pre-Entrance Requirements



# Chapter 1: Immunizations and other pre-entrance requirements

## Contents

Glossary ..... 4

Pre-Entrance Requirements for Children ..... 5

Immunization Forms to be completed by all Parents/Guardians for Each Child..... 6

Pre-Entrance Requirements for Employees/Providers and Volunteers ..... 11

Factsheets and Resources..... 16

## Glossary

**Exemption:** A completed form that allows a child/employee/volunteer to not submit vaccination records for a particular disease, or set of diseases. Exemptions may be provided for either medical or philosophical (statement of conscience) reasons.

**Immunization:** The act of becoming immune to a specific disease or diseases, either through a natural immunity from infection or from vaccination.

**Commissioner of Oaths:** A person authorized to take your oath or solemn affirmation when you sign an affidavit or a statutory declaration. A commissioner does not certify that the statements being made in the affidavit or statutory declaration are true, but only certifies that an oath or solemn affirmation has been administered properly.

**Statement of Conscience:** A completed form that states the parent or employee feels that immunization would conflict with sincerely held convictions based on religion or conscience.

**Medical Contraindications:** A specific situation in which a drug or vaccine should not be used because it may be harmful to the person.

Immunization is one of the safest and most effective health interventions to prevent disease, and protects people of all ages. The more people who are immunized, the more people in our communities are protected. Child care centre owners and operators need to know their role in ensuring children, staff and volunteers in their centres have up to date immunizations, or the proper paperwork completed that shows they are exempt.

### **Pre-entrance requirements for children**

The Child Care and Early Years Act, (last amended Dec 2015), O.R. 137/15 states that all children, who are not registered in school, and attend a child care centre are required to be vaccinated against certain diseases as directed by the Medical Officer of Health, unless a written exemption has been provided.

Children must be immunized against:

- Diphtheria
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Tetanus
- Polio
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Pneumococcal disease
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (commonly known as Hib, or Hib meningitis) for children under 5 years of age only
- Meningococcal disease (two types of vaccine are acceptable)
- Varicella (chickenpox)

The rotavirus vaccine is also recommended, however, the Region of Waterloo Public Health does not require this vaccine for children in child care centres.

Parents may be granted exemption from immunization for their child on medical, religious, or conscientious objection grounds.

## Immunization forms to be completed by all parents/guardians for each child

### Immunization information form

Parents of children attending child care settings and who are not also in school, are required to fill out the form "Immunization Information Form for new registrants attending a child care centre Waterloo Region (Form A)," This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).

To this form, parents must also staple one or more of the following:

- A copy of the original yellow "Immunization Record", or
- A valid medical exemption as signed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, or
  - If a medical exemption is provided for only particular vaccines, a copy of the original yellow "Immunization Record" must be provided to show immunization with other vaccines.
- Statement of religious or philosophical exemption signed by a commissioner of oaths.

The child care centre must forward a copy of the form and a copy of the immunization record or exemption form(s) to Public Health in the envelope provided in the Child Care Centre School package.

The Ministry exemption forms have been updated. Going forward, all new registrants must use the current Ministry forms as they are enrolled.

Links to exemption forms can be found later in this section under "Exemption from immunization".

All new registrants must use the current Ministry exemption form. Links to exemption forms can be found later in this section under "Exemption from Immunization".

### Health practitioner involvement

- The above forms (with the exception of the medical exemption which is completed by a physician or nurse practitioner) may be completed by the parents, who are usually able to provide all necessary information on their child's health.
- If parents do not have the immunization information required to complete the Immunization Information Form for new registrants attending a child care centre Waterloo Region (Form A). This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608). Parents/Guardians may need to get this information from their physician or nurse practitioner.

### Updating immunization information

- Parents are required to notify child care providers of any changes in the child's immunization status such as when a child receives an immunization booster.

- Updates should be submitted in writing by the parent to the Child Care Centre operator on the two part form entitled, “Immunization Update Form for children attending a child care centre in Waterloo Region (Form B)” This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).
- If there are no changes in the immunization status of the child, it is not necessary to complete the form on an annual basis.

### Routine immunization schedule

The chart below outlines the recommended schedule for the vaccines required by Public Health:

Table 1: Routine schedule for children started in infancy, October 2015

Age*	Diphtheria	Tetanus	Pertussis	Polio (Oral/Injectable)	<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> B (HIB)	Pneumococcal	Rotavirus	Measles	Mumps	Rubella	Varicella	Meningococcal	Comments
2 Months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
4 Months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
6 Months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
12 Months						✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
15 Months											✓		
18 Months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
4-6 Years	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		

\*NOTE: The immunization histories of some children may vary from the schedule above for a variety of reasons.

Interpreting some of the schedules may be difficult, particularly if the child's immunization schedule is from outside the province and different from the normal schedule. Public Health staff can assist in determining if the entry requirements have been met if the schedule appears to be different.

Child care providers are encouraged to contact Immunization Services or the Vaccine Preventable Disease Immunization Line at (519) 575-4400 for consultation and advice about immunization status.

## Immunization forms for child care centres

### [Parent Information Letter – For Parents/Guardians of Children Attending Child Care Centres](#)

Immunization Information Form for new registrants attending a child care centre in Waterloo Region (Form A).

- This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).

Immunization Update Form for children attending a child care centre in Waterloo Region (Form B).

- This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).

### **Exemption from immunization**

It is the duty of the child care provider to ensure that all children entering and attending their centre have an up-to-date record of immunization, or have an exemption on file. The parent may request exemption on the following basis:

**Statements of Medical Exemption:** A legally qualified medical practitioner or nurse practitioner gives medical reasons in writing as to why the child should not be immunized.

OR

**Statements of Conscience or Religious Belief Forms:** The parent feels that immunization would conflict with the sincerely held convictions of the parent based on the parent's religion or conscience. These forms must be notarized by a commissioner of oaths prior to submission to the child care centre.

### **Procedure**

1. Parents who advise the child care provider that they wish to have their child exempted from immunization for one of the reasons above should be given the appropriate exemption form by the child care provider.
  - For Medical Exemption: The child care centre should provide “Guidelines for submitting [Medical Exemptions](#)” to the parents with the exemption form.

The parent completes the form with the help of either their family physician or nurse practitioner who is registered with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario or College of Nurses of Ontario, respectively, outlining the disease for which they are medically exempt and how long they need to be exempt for. The physician outlines the reasons for exemptions and signs and dates the form. The exemption form is returned to the child care provider.

- For Religious Belief or a Statement of Conscience: The parent completes the form, and signs and dates the form.

The form must then be notarized by a commissioner of oaths. These can be found throughout the Region of Waterloo. Legal offices, city halls and some community organizations provide the services of a commissioner of oaths. There may be a charge to access this service. The exemption form is returned to the child care provider.

2. The child care provider takes two copies of the original exemption form:
  - The original is provided back to the parents for their records
  - One copy is placed in the child care centres files
  - One copy is submitted to Public Health

### **Guidelines for completing statement of medical exemption**

Medical exemptions fall into two main categories: cases where immunization is not needed because of appropriate evidence of natural immunity, and cases where immunizations may be considered harmful to the health of the child. Medical exemptions may be either temporary or permanent. Where they are permanent and there is not evidence of natural immunity, the child is considered non-immune and therefore subject to exclusion in the event of an outbreak of disease.

The statement of medical exemption should include the reason for exemption (immunity or contraindication) for the specific disease(s) and the length of time the exemption will be in effect. Results of laboratory or other tests (e.g., Schick tests) should be documented in the space provided on the form. Contraindications harmful to health should also be defined.

Any questions or concerns about completion of this form may be directed to the Vaccine Preventable Diseases Program of Region of Waterloo Public Health, at (519) 575-4400.

### **Evidence of immunity**

If a physician can provide a laboratory result that a child is immune to one or more of the diseases covered by the mandatory vaccines, that child will be considered exempt from providing vaccination records for that disease.

### **Medical contraindications**

A medical contraindication to one vaccine does not necessarily indicate a contraindication to all vaccines.

## Pre-entrance requirements for employees/providers and volunteers

### Introduction

The Child Care and Early Years Act (R.S.O. 2014), requires an operator to ensure that staff/providers in child care settings meet pre-employment health and immunization requirements as determined by the local Medical Officer of Health. This section will discuss these requirements.

Employees and volunteers may obtain an exemption from immunization requirements on medical or religious or conscientious grounds.

### Health requirements

1. **Employees/providers** are required to submit the “Pre-Employment Health Form for Employees, Providers and Volunteers in Child Care Centres”.
  - This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).
  - The form collects information regarding their immunization history, tuberculosis screening history, communicable disease history and general health or limitations. It is not necessary for these forms to be completed by a physician. However, under certain circumstances a visit to a physician may be necessary, for example for a tuberculosis (TB) skin test (see TB section below) or for blood work related to communicable disease history.
  - For example, in the case where a person does not know if they have had chickenpox, or if a person's immunity to rubella or other diseases is unknown, blood tests may be a wise next step to determine immunity to these diseases. This information can be particularly important for women of childbearing age to know before there is an outbreak at the child care setting, as some illnesses can pose a risk to a developing fetus.
2. **Volunteers** are required to provide information regarding their immunization history, tuberculosis screening history, communicable disease history and general health or limitations. However, although there is no mandatory requirement at present that these items be completely up-to-date, it is highly recommended for volunteers to be current with their immunizations.

## Immunization requirements for employees/providers

The diseases for which employees/providers are required to be immunized against are:

1. Tetanus, Diphtheria
  - Booster every 10 years (same as for all Canadian adults)
2. Pertussis
  - Every adult should have a one time booster for pertussis (usually given with tetanus and diphtheria).
  - Note: Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis is required once as an adult. For anyone who has had tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis as an adult, then tetanus and diphtheria alone (without pertussis) should be received every 10 years thereafter.
3. Measles, Mumps and Rubella
  - For adults one dose of measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine is necessary for persons born in or after 1970, normally given on or after the first birthday.
  - A second dose (if not already received) is recommended for persons aged 18-25 years and persons who received the killed measles vaccine from 1967 to 1970.
4. Polio
  - Boosting every 10 years is not required; however, a childhood series of polio is required, and most adults would generally have had polio immunization as children in their "baby needles".

## Immunization recommendations for employees/providers

The diseases for which employees/providers are recommended to be immunized against are:

1. Hepatitis B
  - This is not provided through public funding for child care providers, but may be covered under many drug plans
    - Since 1997, grade 7 students, in Ontario, have had the opportunity to receive hepatitis B vaccine in school. Anyone born after 1978 can check with Public Health if they received this vaccine in school.
2. Influenza
  - This vaccine is free to all Ontarians (aged 6 months and older) every fall. A yearly vaccine is needed to be protected against current circulating strains of influenza.

## Volunteers

It is strongly recommended, but not required, that volunteers be immunized in the same manner as employees/providers.

## **Tuberculosis (TB) skin testing requirements**

All new employees/providers are required to complete a tuberculosis (TB) screening questionnaire (included on the Pre-employment health form) prior to starting employment. If they answer “yes” to any of the questions in the TB screening questionnaire, they also need to complete a TB skin test.

It is required that the following groups of employees/providers of child care centres be screened for tuberculosis with a one-step tuberculin skin test in Waterloo Region:

- Persons born in certain areas and who have arrived in Canada within the previous five years. These areas include:
  - Asia (including Middle Eastern countries)
  - Africa
  - Central and South America
  - Eastern Europe
- Persons who have spent more than three months in the above listed areas within the past five years.
- Persons with high-risk medical conditions which include: kidney disease, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, silicosis, or conditions which require drugs that suppress the immune system.
- Persons who know they have been exposed to someone with active tuberculosis disease in the past.

The new employee can self screen, using the “Pre-Employment Health Form for Employees, Providers and Volunteers in Child Care Centres”, to determine if they require a TB skin test or not. This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608). If, as a provider, you are unsure if a new employee/volunteer should have a TB skin test prior to starting employment please call Public Health at 519-575-4400.

## **Volunteers**

Tuberculosis testing is recommended for volunteers who answer “yes” to any question on the TB screening questionnaire. Testing is not mandatory, but is highly recommended for the individual’s protection, as well as for the children they will be looking after.

Note: Volunteers are defined as those expecting to work 150 hours/year or more (approximately one half day per week); if working less than this, no TB skin testing is recommended.

If there are any questions regarding these recommendations please call Public Health, Tuberculosis Program at 519-575-4400.

### **Other infectious diseases**

Employees/providers/volunteers should also make sure that they have accurate information on their immunity to chickenpox and rubella, particularly for females in childbearing years. Again, this is required for employees/providers, and highly recommended for volunteers.

Individuals are encouraged to contact the Waterloo Public Health Communicable Diseases and Vaccine Information Phone Lines at 519-575-4400 for consultation and helpful advice.

### **Pre-employment health for employees/providers/volunteers in child care settings**

All adults working in child care settings are required to fill out the form entitled: "Pre-Employment Health Form for Employees, Providers and Volunteers in Child Care Centres".

This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).

This form must be completed and submitted to the operator or designate before the first day of employment/attendance at the child care setting.

For employees/providers, the operator or designate should ensure that the completed form confirming immunization is up-to-date is submitted to them before the start of the employee's/provider's employment. For volunteers, the completed form should be submitted to the operator or designate.

All forms must be kept on file at the child care setting or designated location.

Employees/providers may request exemption on the following basis:

**Statements of Medical Exemption:** A legally qualified medical practitioner gives medical reasons in writing as to why the employee/provider should not be immunized.

OR

**Statements of Conscience or Religious Belief Forms:** The employee/provider feels that immunization would conflict with their sincerely held convictions based on the employee's religion or conscience. These forms must be notarized by a commissioner of oaths prior to submission to the child care centre.

All forms must be kept on file at the child care setting or designated location.

### **Updating information**

Employees/providers/volunteers need to notify operators or their designate regarding any changes in their health (e.g., medication, disease) or immunization. This should be given to the operator/designate in writing and attached to the required Health Certificate. Alternatively, a new "Pre-Employment Health Form for Employees, Providers and Volunteers in Child Care Centres" form can be completed and submitted,

for example in cases where there is a great deal of new information regarding health or immunization status.

This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).

If there are no changes in the health or immunization status, it is not necessary to fill in a Health Certificate on an annual basis.

[Summary of pre-entrance requirements for children, employees, providers and volunteer](#)

The following are the pre-entrance requirements for child care centres.

	<b>Child</b>	<b>Employees/Provider</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>
<b>Health Certificate and Immunization Form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form A to be completed and signed by parent upon registration</li> <li>Form B is used to update at child care setting when new immunizations are received, or for health status changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Pre-employment Health Form for Employees/Providers/Volunteers in Child Care Centres” to be completed by employees/providers/volunteers and kept on file</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Pre-employment Health Form for Employees/Providers/Volunteers in Child Care Centres” to be completed by employees/providers/volunteers and kept on file</li> </ul>
<b>Immunization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All listed immunizations are mandatory or exemption forms completed and on file</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All immunizations listed are mandatory or exemption forms completed and on file</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All immunizations listed are strongly recommended for individual’s own protection</li> </ul>
<b>Tuberculosis (TB) Testing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new employees/providers are required to complete a TB screening questionnaire (included on the Pre-employment health form) prior to starting employment. If they answer “yes” to any of the questions in the TB screening questionnaire,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TB testing is recommended for volunteers who answer “yes” to any question on the TB screening questionnaire. Testing is not mandatory, but is highly recommended for the individual’s protection, as well as</li> </ul>

		they also need to complete a TB skin test.	for the children they are caring for.
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## Factsheets and resources

1. [Parent Information Letter for children attending a child care centre in Waterloo Region](#)
2. Immunization Information Form for new registrants attending a child care centre in Waterloo Region (Form A)
  - This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).
3. Immunization Update Form for children attending a child care centre in Waterloo Region (Form B)
  - This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).
4. [Statements of Medical Exemption](#)
5. [Statements of Conscience or Religious Belief Forms](#)
6. Pre-Employment Health Form for Employees, Providers and Volunteers in Child Care Centres
  - This form can be obtained by calling Immunization Services at 519-575-4400, extension 5001 (TTY: 519-575-4608).