



NJ Department of Health Vaccine Preventable Disease Program

New Jersey Minimum Immunization Requirements for Child Care/Preschool Attendance
N.J.A.C. 8:57-4 Immunization of Pupils in School

Guide for checking compliance

- Step 1: Each child attending/enrolling must present proof of immunity or valid medical or religious exemption to vaccines.
- Step 2: Determine child's present age.
- Step 3: Find appropriate age range; if child falls between stated ages use lower age range requirements.
- Step 4: Compare record received with requirements listed on the chart below.

<i>Age at which children must have vaccines to be in compliance:</i>	Minimum Number of Doses Required for Each Vaccine						
	DTaP	Polio	Hib	Pneumococcal (PCV)	MMR	Varicella	Influenza
By 3 months	1 dose	1 dose	1 dose	1 dose	None	None	None
By 5 months	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses	None	None	None
By 7 months	3 doses	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses	None	None	1 dose *
By 11 months	3 doses	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses	None [§]	None [¶]	1 dose
By 14 months	3 doses	2 doses	1-4 doses [†] (see footnote)	1-4 doses [†] (see footnote)	None [§]	None [¶]	1 dose
By 16 months	3 doses	2 doses	1-4 doses [†] (see footnote)	At least 1 dose given on or after the first birthday	1 dose [§]	None	1 dose
By 19 months	4 doses	3 doses	At least 1 dose given on or after the first birthday.	At least one dose given on or after the first birthday.	1 dose	None	1 dose
By 20 months	4 doses	3 doses	At least 1 dose given on or after the first birthday.	At least one dose given on or after the first birthday.	1 dose	1 dose [¶]	1 dose

Additional vaccines are recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The chart above lists only the vaccines that are required for child care/preschool attendance in NJ. For the complete ACIP Recommended Immunization Schedule, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>.

* The current seasonal influenza vaccine is required every year for those children 6 months through 59 months of age. Students who have not received the flu vaccine by December 31 must be excluded (not allowed to attend child care/preschool) for the duration of influenza season (through March 31), until they receive at least one dose of the influenza vaccine or until they turn 60 months of age. Children enrolling in child care/preschool after December 31, must provide documentation of receiving the current seasonal flu vaccine before being allowed to enter school. Students enrolling in school after March 31 are not required to receive the flu vaccine; however, flu season may extend until May and therefore getting a flu vaccine even late in the season is still protective.

† *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) and pneumococcal (PCV) vaccines are special cases. If a child started late with these vaccines he/she may need fewer doses. One dose of each is required on or after the first birthday in all cases.

Example #1:

Children 12-15 months: A child entering child care/preschool between 12-15 months of age, will need to show documentation of receiving at least 1 dose each of Hib and PCV vaccines in order to be allowed entry into child care/preschool. If the child has a dose of Hib and PCV administered on or after the first birthday no further doses of Hib or PCV will be required. However, additional doses may be recommended by ACIP for optimal protection.

Example #2:

A child who has been attending child care/preschool prior to 12-months of age should have at least 2 doses of Hib and PCV between 2-11 months of age. A dose of PCV and Hib is required on or after the first birthday.

NOTE: The use of combination vaccines may allow students to receive the 1st birthday booster dose of Hib between 15-18 months of age; therefore, the child will not be considered deficient until 19 months of age.

§ MMR vaccine may be given as early as 12 months of age, but NJ requires children to receive the vaccine at 15 months of age. Prior to age 15 months, a child may enter preschool/child care without a documented dose of MMR. A child who does not have one documented dose of MMR vaccine by 16 months (once they turn 16 months) of age must be excluded from attending childcare/preschool until he/she receives the vaccine.

¶ Varicella vaccine may be given as early as 12 months of age, but NJ requires children to receive the vaccine at 19 months of age. Prior to age 19 months, a child may enter preschool/child care without a documented dose of varicella. A child who does not have one documented dose of Varicella vaccine by 20 months (once they turn 20 months) of age must be excluded from attending childcare/preschool until he/she receives the vaccine. A child will not have to receive the varicella vaccine if he/she previously had chickenpox as long as a parent can provide the school with one of the following: 1) Documented laboratory evidence showing immunity (protection) from chickenpox, 2) A physician's written statement that the child previously had chickenpox, or 3) A parent's written statement that the child previously had chickenpox.

Grace Periods:

4 Day Grace Period: All vaccines administered less than or equal to 4 days before either the specified minimum age or dose spacing intervals shall be counted as valid and shall not require revaccination in order to enter or remain in a school, preschool, or child care facility. Please note that ACIP does not recommend applying the four-day grace period for the dose spacing interval between two live vaccines. However, for auditing purposes, this will be acceptable.

30 Day Grace Period: Those children transferring into a NJ school, preschool, or child care facility from out of state/out of country shall be allowed a 30 day grace period in order to obtain past immunization documentation before provisional status begins.

Technical Guidance for Immunization Record Auditing

Exemptions

Q: What should be included in an acceptable religious exemption?

A: A religious exemption is not the same as a philosophical, moral or conscientious exemption. A religious exemption does not have to include the name of the religion, nor does it need to be notarized nor does it need to be signed by a religious leader. It can be filed by a parent or guardian of a minor or by an adult individual. All schools, child care centers, and local health officers may be advised that the religious exemption extends to private, parochial, and public institutions. When a parent or guardian submits their written religious exemption to immunization, which contains some religious reference, those persons charged with implementing administrative rules at N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.4, should not question whether the parent's professed religious statement or stated belief is reasonable, acceptable, sincere and bona fide. In practice, if the written statement contains the word "religion" or "religious" or some reference thereto, then the statement should be accepted and the religious exemption of mandatory immunization(s) granted. Please note, religious-affiliated schools cannot be challenged on their decision.

Q: What is a medical exemption?

A: Only a physician licensed to practice medicine/osteopathic medicine and a nurse practitioner can write a medical exemption. A medical exemption must indicate a specific period of time in which the child cannot receive specific vaccinations. Reason(s) for medical contraindication must be enumerated by the ACIP and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Precautions to receiving a vaccine are not contraindications but a provider must take these into consideration. Please see the following link to view the "Guide to Vaccine Contraindications and Precautions" <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/vac-admin/contraindications-vacc.htm>.

Q: Can unvaccinated children be excluded from school during a vaccine preventable disease outbreak?

A: Yes. Children without proof of immunity as defined by ACIP, including those with medical and religious exemptions, may be excluded from a school, preschool, or child care facility during a vaccine preventable disease outbreak or threatened outbreak as determined by the Commissioner, Department of Health or his or her designee. In addition, anybody having control of a school may, on account of the prevalence of any communicable disease, or to prevent the spread of communicable disease, prohibit the attendance of any teacher or pupil of any school under their control and specify the time during which the teacher or scholar shall remain away from school. The Department of Health shall provide guidance to the school of the appropriateness of any such prohibition.

Immunization Compliance

Q: When should children be marked deficient for vaccines?

A: Children need to receive a minimum of each age-appropriate vaccine prior to entering child care and preschool. For auditing purposes in child care/preschool, auditing is based on the later end of the ACIP vaccine age intervals. For example, the ACIP Recommended Vaccine Schedule indicates a range of 15-18 months for children to receive the fourth dose of DTaP. Therefore, a child would be marked deficient if he/she does not have the fourth DTaP dose by 19 months (once they turn 19 months) of age. The same applies to Polio vaccine. The ACIP schedule allows a range of 6-18 months for the third dose of Polio. A child should not be marked deficient for the third dose until 19 months of age.

Q: Children are required to receive a minimum of one dose of Hib-containing and a pneumococcal conjugate vaccine on or after the first birthday. How soon after the first birthday should children be marked deficient?

A: According to the ACIP Recommended Immunization Schedule, the last dose of Hib and PCV should be given between 12-15 months. Children should be marked deficient for PCV once they turn 16 months of age. The use of combination vaccines may allow students to receive the 1st birthday booster dose of Hib between 15-18 months of age; therefore, the child will not be considered deficient until 19 months of age.

Q: The ACIP recommends Varicella vaccine at 12 months of age. Why doesn't NJ require varicella vaccine until 19 months of age?

A: NJ immunization requirements are based upon the ACIP recommendations during the time they were written. Although children can receive the vaccine sooner, NJ does not require the varicella vaccine until 19 months of age. Children should be marked deficient if they do not have this vaccine once they turn 20 months of age.

Q: If a child has had chickenpox disease, does he/she still need to receive the varicella vaccine?

A: Children who present either documented laboratory evidence, a physician's statement, or a parental statement of previous varicella disease, shall not be required to receive varicella vaccine. Please note that parental and/or physician statements need to be in writing.

Q: Can lab evidence of immunity (titers/blood tests) be used to prove immunity so that children do not need to receive vaccines?

A: Serologic evidence of immunity (titer testing) is only accepted as proof of immunity when no vaccination documentation can be provided or prior history is questionable. It cannot be used in lieu of receiving the vaccinations required for attendance in NJ schools, preschools, and child care centers. The Antibody Titer law is an exception to this rule (See "*What is the Antibody Titer Law*"?)

Please Note: Serologic tests are not available for all vaccines. A list of ACIP approved serologic tests for school immunization requirements can be accessed in the NJ Immunization Requirements Frequently Asked Questions.

Q: What is the Antibody Titer Law?

A: The Antibody Titer Law (Holly's Law, NJSA 26:2N-8-11), passed on January 14, 2004, requires the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) to accept serologic evidence of protective immunity to measles, mumps and rubella in lieu of the second ACIP recommended measles, mumps and rubella vaccine.

Q: Is it acceptable for a child to receive single antigen measles, mumps, rubella vaccines rather than MMR vaccine?

A: Single antigen measles, mumps, and/or rubella vaccine is no longer produced for the U.S. market but it may still be available in foreign countries. Although children may receive MMR vaccine as soon as 12 months of age, NJ requires 1 dose of a MMR vaccine for children 15 months of age entering child care, preschool, or pre-kindergarten. Children should be marked deficient if they do not have one documented dose of MMR vaccine once they turn 16 months of age. A child is required to receive two doses of measles, one dose of mumps, and one dose of rubella once he/she enters Kindergarten. Since single antigen vaccine is not readily available, most children will have two MMR vaccines.

Grace Periods and Provisional Admission

Q: Can you please explain the Four-Day Grace Period?

A: All vaccines administered less than or equal to 4 days before either the specified minimum age or dose spacing intervals shall be counted as valid and shall not require revaccination in order to enter or remain in a school, preschool, or child care facility. Please note that ACIP does not recommend applying the four-day grace period for the dose spacing interval between two live vaccines. However, for auditing purposes, this will be acceptable.

Q: How do I determine the minimum dose spacing intervals between vaccinations?

A: NJ follows the ACIP Recommended Catch-Up Immunization Schedule. Please see the following link for guidance:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/child/catchup-schedule-pr.pdf>.

Q: Can you please explain the 30-day grace period?

A: Students entering a NJ school from out of state or out of country are allowed up to 30 days to provide proof of immunization history before their provisional status begins.

Please review the following scenarios for further clarification:

If after the 30 days have elapsed and no documentation of previous vaccination is provided; the child may not attend school until one dose of all age-appropriate required vaccines are received before being provisionally admitted.

If schools are notified within the 30 days that documentation cannot be provided; the child may continue attending school since the 30 days have not elapsed. However, it is the responsibility of the school nurse or person in charge of the school to inform the parents that their child must receive one dose of all age-appropriate required vaccines before provisional status begins. Please reference below for clarification of provisional admission.

Q: To whom does the 30-Day Grace Period apply?

A: According to the New Jersey immunization regulations, the 30-day grace period only applies to transfer students, coming from out of state/out of country. This does not apply to *in-state* transfer students.

Q: What is Provisional Admission?

A: Provisional admission allows a child to enter/attend school after having received a minimum of one dose of each of the required vaccines. Pupils must be actively in the process of completing the series and on schedule to receive subsequent doses as rapidly as medically feasible. A school nurse or school administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccine(s).

For the complete list of “NJ Immunization Requirements Frequently Asked Questions”, please visit <http://nj.gov/health/cd/imm.shtml>