The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences
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To: Early Education and Care Program Directors
Preschool Center Directors

From: Amy Kershaw, Commissioner
Department of Early Education and Care

Pedro Martinez, Commissioner
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Kathryn Ahnger-Pier, MPH, Director
Immunization Division, Department of Public Health

Re: 2026-2027 Childcare/Preschool Immunization Survey

Date: September 2026

The annual public and private **Childcare/Preschool Immunization Survey** is conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) Immunization Division. The purpose of this survey is to identify children entering Childcare/Preschool who are not protected against vaccine-preventable diseases and to ensure that they are properly immunized according to state requirements. These data are publicly available on the Immunization Division website.

Regulations established by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the Department of Public Health require that:

1) Licensees must maintain immunization records for all children enrolled in their program.
2) All children must be age-appropriately immunized to attend unless they have a medical or religious exemption.

These regulations are designed to prevent illness and disruptions caused by diseases.

School Immunization Requirements

The following immunizations are required for children 2 years and older entering early education and care programs or preschool:

- 4 or more doses of DTaP vaccine
- 3 or more doses of polio vaccine
- 1 dose of MMR vaccine
- 1 to 4 doses of Hib vaccine (depending on the age when doses are received)
- 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine
- 1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine or physician-certified history of chickenpox disease

Recommended Vaccines

- 1 dose of influenza vaccine for the current influenza season
- 1 dose of updated COVID-19 vaccine
- 4 doses of PCV vaccine (PCV15 or PCV20)
- 2 doses of hepatitis A vaccine
- 2 to 3 doses of rotavirus vaccine (depending on vaccine formulation)

While the Childcare/Preschool Immunization Survey focuses on children 2 years and older, attendees <2 years should still be immunized for their age according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule.

For additional details, see the MA DPH 2026-2027 School Immunization Requirements document.

Adult Staff Guidelines

Following EEC regulations, all early education and care staff must provide proof of immunity to measles, mumps, and rubella. Questions regarding staff immunity to measles, mumps, and rubella are included in the annual immunization survey. Information and instructions about collecting and reporting this information are available on the MA DPH website.

Every Student Succeeds Act

Please note that unimmunized or partially immunized children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care attending a public-school preschool program cannot be denied entry to public schools if they do not have immunization records. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) states that if a child or youth who is homeless or in foster care arrives lacking immunizations or medical records, the parent/guardian should be referred to the district's homeless education liaison/foster care point of contact. This individual is responsible for obtaining relevant academic records and immunizations or medical records and for ensuring that students who are experiencing homelessness or in foster care are attending school while the records are obtained. The student must be enrolled and permitted

to attend public school in the interim. Additionally, EEC-licensed programs are allowed a 6-month grace period from the time of enrollment to obtain immunization records for any child who is experiencing homelessness or is in foster care at the time of entering care. If you have any questions about the Every Student Succeeds Act, please contact the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) at (781) 338-3700 or compliance@doe.mass.edu.

Before- and After-school Programs

Before- and after-school programs are not expected to complete the immunization survey if immunization records are on file at each child's school. If your program falls into this category, please disregard the survey invitation and contact the MA DPH Immunization Data Assessment Unit at ImmAssessmentUnit@mass.gov to remove your program from our contact list. Although you do not need to complete the survey, you are still responsible for ensuring the immunization records are on file at each child's school.

Survey Deadline

Your efforts in completing this survey contribute to protecting our children from vaccine-preventable diseases. The Childcare/Preschool Immunization Survey is due by **Friday, January 22, 2026.**

Refer to the survey worksheets and instructions to help complete the survey accurately. Please retain copies of the survey and worksheets to facilitate follow-up on children and staff not fully immunized. You may be chosen for a randomized audit of immunization records or be called to review your records by MA DPH Immunization Division staff. If you have any questions, please email the MA DPH Data Assessment Unit at ImmAssessmentUnit@mass.gov.

Immunization Survey Results

In 2025-2026, the immunization records of 90,319 Childcare/Preschool children from 2,965 licensed programs were reviewed. Immunization rates by program for programs reporting 30 or more children are available on the Immunization Division website. Historical data can be found on our Immunization Survey Archive page.

Immunization Survey of Children > 2 Years of Age Enrolled in Licensed Group Childcare/Preschool

School Year	No. of Children	> 4 DTaP	> 3 Polio	1 MMR	> 3 Hib	3 Hep B	Immunity to Chickenpox*	Series Complete[1]	Medical Exemptions	Religious Exemptions
2025-26	90,319	96.4%	97.0%	97.5%	96.6%	96.8%	97.1%	94.4%	0.13%	1.20%
2024-25	94,528	96.5%	96.8%	97.6%	96.6%	96.7%	97.2%	94.2%	0.14%	1.02%
2023-24	88,674	96.5%	96.9%	97.7%	96.7%	96.7%	97.4%	94.4%	0.13%	0.93%
2022-23	78,672	96.6%	97.1%	97.7%	96.8%	96.6%	97.3%	94.5%	0.15%	0.88%
2021-22	80,329	96.2%	97.4%	95.9%	96.0%	96.8%	96.8%	93.4%	0.17%	0.77%

*Immunity to chickenpox disease includes children with a documented physician-certified reliable history of chickenpox disease or 1 dose of varicella vaccine.

[1]4-3-1-3-3-1 Series: 4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 Hep B, 1 Varicella

Additional Resources and Information

While the rate of religious exemptions has remained relatively steady in recent years, we encourage schools and programs to review their policies and practices regarding exemptions, including the recommendation to have families renew these annually.

The resources below are available to help improve communication with vaccine-hesitant parents:

- *Personal belief exemptions for vaccination put people at risk. Examine the evidence for yourself*
- *What if you don't immunize your child?*
- *Childhood vaccine information for parents and caregivers – a page of resources*

Massachusetts school immunization requirements have been very effective in preventing the outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases. Continued enforcement of the immunization requirements is essential to the health of our children.