



California
Department of
Health Services

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Department of Health Services



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TO: Public and Private Schools in California

FROM: Howard Backer, M.D., M.P.H., Chief
Immunization Branch

SUBJECT: Hurricane Katrina Evacuees and Immunization Requirements

Provisional School Enrollment for up to 30 School Days

To assist local jurisdictions that are housing families displaced by Hurricane Katrina, the California Department of Health Services, Immunization Branch is providing the following guidance for compliance with child care and school immunization requirements. Guidance has been also provided by the California Department of Education (CDE) at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/re/ht/katrina.asp>.

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Act requires immediate enrollment of students who are homeless, including those made homeless by natural disaster. These students do not need to provide proof of residency, immunization records, school records or legal guardianship papers to enroll in school.

Child Care and School Entry Laws from Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana

As the laws regarding the immunizations required for child care and school entry in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana are similar to California law, children who were in licensed child care or school in these states before being displaced to California initially may be presumed to be up to date for vaccinations required in California. However, efforts should then be made to confirm whether children are up to date.

Follow-up Evaluation of Immunization Status after School Entry

Once students are enrolled, California Health and Safety Code, Section 120340 and California Code of Regulations, Sections 6045 and 6070 (d) allow child care facilities and schools to admit students who are transferring from a school in another state for a period of up to 30 school days (i.e., approximately 6 school weeks) to produce their immunization records. We recognize that this requirement may be daunting given the disruption caused by Hurricane Katrina.

State immunization registries in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana are providing access to queries for the immunization records of children displaced by Hurricane Katrina. During the 30-day grace period after school entry, please contact your Local Health Department's Immunization Program for assistance in obtaining immunization records and/or immunizations for evacuee children who are identified as needing additional immunizations. A list of Local Health Departments Immunization Programs is available at <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/izgroup/provider.htm> under "Vaccine Programs - Local Health Department Listing".

California Health and Safety Code, Section 120375 (a) and California Code of Regulations, Section 6070 (e) requires that child care facilities and schools must follow-up on students admitted without proof of immunization so that they can be protected in case of an outbreak of any vaccine-covered disease. A suggested template form that schools and others can use for tracking these students, also reviewed by CDE, has been provided with this letter. This form is suitable as an attachment to California School Immunization Record ("Blue Card") for the displaced child. The bottom half of the form may be used for local needs. The form is also at the Immunization Branch website: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/izgroup/requirements.htm>.

Enclosures

cc: Immunization Branch Field Representatives
California Department of Education
California Department of Social Services