

## Change in Exemption Requirements

July 22, 2011

Dear Parent or Guardian:

State law requires that before attending a licensed childcare or school, children must get immunized against certain diseases that vaccines can prevent. Parents and guardians meet this requirement by filling out and turning in a Certificate of Immunization Status, showing their child has the required vaccinations (or that he or she has immunity already because of having the illness).

If parents and guardians choose to exempt their child from one or more of the required vaccines, they must fill out a Certificate of Exemption form. The 2011 Washington State Legislature passed a law that changes the process for getting an immunization exemption. All other parts of the law remain the same.

The new law says that:

- Parents or guardians who want to exempt their child from school or childcare immunization requirements must first talk to a licensed health care provider about the benefits and risks of immunization. The provider must sign the Certificate of Exemption verifying that the parent got this information.
- A health care provider does not need to sign the form for parents or guardians who show membership in a church or religious body that does not allow medical care from a health care provider.
- A provider may also write and sign a letter that verifies the same information instead of signing the form.
- Schools and licensed childcare can accept copies of the exemption form and provider letter.
- Providers signing the form in good faith won't face legal liability.

Beginning July 22, 2011, parents or guardians who want to exempt their child from immunization requirements must fill out and turn in the updated exemption form to their school or childcare. Find more information and the form at [www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/default.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/default.htm).

Skipping vaccinations or missing vaccine doses makes it more likely that your child can catch and spread serious illnesses like whooping cough and measles, which vaccines can prevent. Getting kids all their recommended immunizations protects them, their classmates, friends, and families from preventable diseases. Kids who don't get fully immunized may have to stay home from school, preschool, or childcare if a disease outbreak occurs.

If you have a disability and need this document in another format, please call 1-800-322-2588 (711-TTY relay).

DOH 348-237 May 2011