IMMUNIZATION
in Colorado Child Care Centers and Pre-Schools, 2020-2021

IMMUNIZE COLORADO

Overview

Vaccines are a safe and effective way to prevent the spread of serious disease and keep children healthy as they grow. For each birth cohort vaccinated in the U.S. per the recommended schedule, vaccines save 40,000 lives, prevent 20 million cases of disease, and save $17 billion in direct healthcare costs.

All students and child care staff deserve a healthy environment that supports their wellbeing and builds a strong foundation for early learning and development. It takes an entire community to protect against serious disease. Because diseases like measles and whooping cough can spread quickly, especially in child care settings, high vaccination rates are important to help protect the health of children, staff and others in the community — including those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons or babies still too young to receive vaccines. This is known as herd immunity, or community protection.

Ensuring high vaccination coverage and compliance with child care vaccination policy is important not only for the health of children and staff, but also for emergency response efforts. High vaccination coverage also helps prevent societal and economic costs, absenteeism and exclusions. Now more than ever it is evident that a child's care and education can be interrupted due to a public health crisis like disease outbreak. Vaccination can help avert these interruptions and protect childrens' learning environments.

Why is Immunization Important During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine, are critical to protecting kids from dangerous diseases. Keeping children up to date with all recommended vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic is critical protecting them from preventable illness. As with COVID-19, a case or outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease could force children to be excluded from child care and miss out on valuable learning, and could even force child care closures in some cases. Maintaining high vaccination rates can help to stop additional outbreaks of disease in our communities that could futher overwhelm our healthcare systems.

Which Vaccines Are **Required** for Child Care and Pre-School Attendance?

MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)	Penumococcal
DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)	HepB (Hepatitis B)
Inactivated poliovirus (Polio)	Varicella (Chicken Pox)
Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b)	

Which Vaccines Are Also **Recommended** by the CDC?

Rotavirus*
Hepatitis A*
Influenza (Flu)*

*While not required for child care or pre-school attendance, these vaccines are recommended by the CDC. Visit the CDC's website to learn more about the vaccine schedule and the diseases that vaccines protect against.

Did You Know?

5,804 Colorado children under age five were hospitalized or visited an emergency department for vaccine-preventable diseases in 2019.*

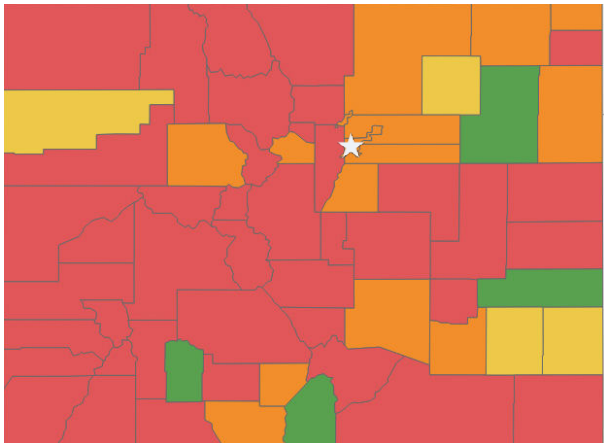
$54 million was charged by hospitals and emergency departments to treat children under five for vaccine-preventable diseases in 2019.*

57% of Colorado kids hospitalized with vaccine-preventable disease are five years old or younger.*

97% (approximately) of vaccine exemptions in Colorado are claimed for non-medical reasons.

*Sourced from Colorado Hospital Association data.

County Level Rates of Non-Medical Exemptions for the MMR (Measles-Mumps-Rubella) Vaccine, 2020-2021



0% | 1.25% - 2.5%
Lower than 1.25% | 2.5 % or higher

County-level non-medical exemption rates range from 0% - 37%.

This information can be viewed for each vaccine on the CDPHE school immunization data website or Immunize Colorado's data dashboard.

Do Colorado Child Care Facilities have Complete Immunization Policies?

A recent analysis shows approximately **40%** of child care centers in Colorado do not have a vaccination policy available on their website. Of those that do have a vaccination policy available, **62%** are classified as incomplete, meaning that they lack information on one or more important components, including:

1. **WHICH** vaccines are required to comply with the center's policy
2. **WHEN** immunization documentation is required to be shared with the center
3. **HOW** immunization records should be submitted to the center
4. The **CONSEQUENCES** of not complying with the policy
5. **WHETHER** any exemptions to vaccines are allowed

IMMUNIZATION
in Conejos County, 2020-2021

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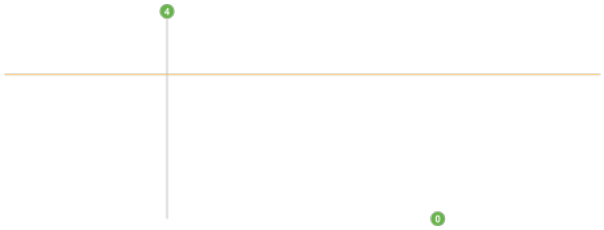
How Is My County Doing?

Total county child care enrollment: 85 students

- Personal belief exemption rates for any vaccine range from **0% - 4%**. The median exemption rate for MMR is 0% and the median exemption rate for DTaP is 0%.
- Depending on the vaccine, between **0** and **1** students in Conejos County claimed an exemption.
- Depending on the vaccine, between **0** and **4** students in Conejos County have an incomplete or missing record.
- **1** facilities in Conejos County have exemption rates under 2.5% and **1** have exemption rates higher than 2.5%, making them higher risk for disease outbreaks.

Percentage of personal belief exemptions for the MMR vaccine at each child care facility in Conejos County



The orange line represents 2.5%, the exemption rate at which facilities begin to be at risk for a disease outbreak.

Why Is Reporting Immunization Rates Important?

If there is an outbreak of measles or whooping cough in a child care facility or pre-school, administrators need to know which children to exclude from attending child care to protect both the individual child, their classmates and child care staff.

Explore your county's data dashboard and access releated resources at immunizecolorado.org

WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A PARENT?

- **Review the immunization rates at your child care center or pre-school.** Facilities that have high immunization rates are at lower risk for outbreaks of preventable diseases.
- **Ask about flu shot policies at your child care center or pre-school.** Are children and staff required to get a flu shot each year? Although the flu vaccine is not required for attendance at licensed child care facilities, the CDC recommends everyone over 6 months receive one annually.
- **Sumbit your child's vaccination records to your child care facility *each* time your child receives a vaccine (at ages 2, 4, 6, 12, and 18 months).** This is required under state law. Non-medical exemptions must also be submitted at these intervals.
- **Ensure any family members who come into contact with your child are current on redommended vaccines.** This provides a circle of protection around your child against any diseases they cannot yet be fully vaccinated against.

WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A CHILD CARE PROVIDER?

- **Document and annually report your facility's immunization and exemption rates to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).** This reporting is required under state licensing laws.
- **Collect immunization records or certificates of non-medical exemption from parents.** This must be done for each child at ages 2, 4, 6, 12 and 18 months. Medical exemption certificates must be collected annually.
- **Consider creating a comprehensive child care immunization policy**, including a recommendation or requirement that staff be fully immunized. Research shows parents highly value vaccination rates when deciding where to send their child for pre-school or child care. For sample policy language, view Immunize Colorado's Child Care Vaccine Policy Toolkit.
- **Ensure staff are adequately trained on state vaccination requirements.** State law requires child care staff responsible for immunization record keeping to annually complete the Child Care/Preschool Immunization Course.

What We Can Do Together

REMIND students, families and staff of the importance of on-time vaccination and child care vaccine requirements.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS between child care administrators, parents and local public health to meet state vaccination requirements.

PARTNER with other stakeholders to identify opportunities to deliver and/or improve access to vaccines for students and staff.

SEEK SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE from your local public health agency and CDPHE regarding communicable disease control protocol.

STAY INFORMED of science-based immunization information, as well as what's happening with vaccine coverage rates and outbreaks in your community and beyond. Vaccine-preventable disease can spread quickly across regions.

ENCOURAGE families to provide accurate vaccination records rather than claim an exemption out of convenience. Assist families in locating their child's immunization record.

SUPPORT POLICIES that help families access vaccines and ensure appropriate funding for resources that support disease response efforts, such as the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS).

Senate Bill 163, passed in 2020, was fully implemented in 2021 and changed the process for claiming a non-medical exemption. Visit our website to learn more.