



## OPEP- Organization of Parenting Education Programs

in Washington State Community and Technical Colleges

### 2013 Insurance and Risk Management

#### **Revisions to OPEP Risk Management Manual**

(Adopted 4/11/13) This section will be added to the Risk Management Manual when it is revised.

#### **Immunizations**

**Confidentiality:** Access to immunization records should be limited only to people who need know this information (e.g. preschool immunization person, teacher/instructor, director). Information contained in immunization forms should be kept confidential. Immunization records should be stored separately from other preschool records in a secure location at the preschool.

Immunizations are a safe and effective way to keep children healthy and to prevent disease in the preschool setting. Diseases that vaccines prevent spread easily in group settings, so children, teachers, and parents are particularly at risk for these in the preschool setting. In addition, those not fully vaccinated are susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases.

**Requirements:** Children in the program must meet all local and state health department immunization requirements.

- For immunization information and forms, go to the Washington State Department of Health website at:  
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/Children.aspx>

A **Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS)** shall be completed upon registration and updated for each child yearly. To avoid excess work, parents can simply update the same CIS that the preschool has on file. Parents can get their child's immunization record from their provider or ask for a copy from the Child Profile Immunization Registry.

For a child to be exempt (excused) from a required vaccine, parents must give the preschool a completed **Certificate of Exemption (COE)** that has been signed by both

the parent or guardian and a licensed healthcare provider. The healthcare provider must sign to verify that the parent got information about the benefits and risks of immunization. A child can be exempt (not immunized) against one or more of the vaccine-preventable diseases due to medical, religious, or personal/philosophical reasons.

By signing the **COE**, parents acknowledge that their child may be excluded from attending the preschool in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease for which the child is exempt. The child would be excluded until the local public health officer decides it is safe to return.

**Record Keeping:** Each preschool should designate 1-2 people to be in charge of immunization record keeping. Having this information readily available is important during an outbreak or suspected outbreak to protect children, teachers, and parents from the spread of diseases that vaccines can prevent.

This role could be assigned to a parent, teacher, or director. A new parent board or committee position could be created for this role. This person's duties would include the following:

- Gather, check, and assess **Certificates of Immunization (CIS)** and **Certificates of Exemption (COE)**
  - Determine each child's immunization status as complete, conditional, exempt, or out of compliance:
    - Complete: fully immunized according to minimum requirements.
    - Conditional: in the process of being immunized according to minimum requirements.
    - Exempt: if parent/guardian and health care provider signs a **COE** indicating a vaccine or full required dosage of vaccine will not be received.
    - Out of Compliance: if child does not have any of the other statuses.
- Create and maintain a secure storage system for immunization records to identify susceptible children to use in the event of a disease outbreak.
  - It is recommended that four separate sealed envelopes be created for each class, labeled as follows:
    - Complete (fully immunized)
    - Conditional (in the process of being immunized)
    - Exempt (have a signed COE)
    - Out of Compliance (none of the above statuses)
  - The confidentiality statement at the beginning of this section should be written prominently on the outside of each envelope.
- Keep immunization forms on file for as long as the child remains in the preschool, then return form to caregiver when child leaves program.

## **Reporting Disease Outbreaks:**

Child care and preschool providers should report contagious disease outbreaks to their local health department. If you are unsure when to make a report, contact your local health department for advice. During a disease investigation, local health staff will give teachers and parents step-by-step guidance on how to deal with the situation.

Depending on the situation and type of disease, guidance may include:

- Preventative treatment for affected individuals.
- Exclusion of at-risk persons or persons showing symptoms.
- Information on the disease for parents and teachers.
- Review of immunization records at the preschool.
- Temporary closure of the preschool.

To help control the spread of the disease, you should determine who in the facility could have been exposed to the disease and who is susceptible to developing disease. For this reason, you should be able to identify children considered at risk for the disease. At-risk children are those whose immunizations are not complete, including those who are:

- Exempt for medical, religious, or personal/philosophical reasons.
- In the process of completing their immunization series, which means they have a “conditional” status.
- Medically fragile or immune-compromised.
- Infants not old enough to have received the vaccine yet.

Having immunization certificates separated into status envelopes ready will save time and make the investigative process efficient and thorough.