



Position Statement on School and Child Care Vaccination Requirements

March 2023

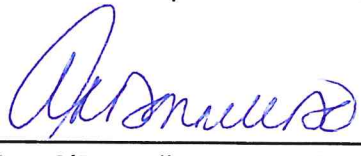
State vaccination requirements are important tools for maintaining high vaccination coverage rates and in turn, lower rates of vaccine-preventable diseases. The Scott County Board of Health recognizes that high rates of community vaccination protect not only those who are immunized but also those not able to receive or respond to vaccines, including children too young to be immunized, individuals with well-documented medical contraindications to vaccines, and people with compromised immune systems. Vaccines protect against 17 preventable diseases and recently decreasing vaccination rates are already associated with outbreaks of potentially deadly infections including measles, whooping cough (pertussis) and polio. The Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends maintenance and enhancement of vaccination requirements for child care, school, and college attendance to increase vaccination rates and decrease rates of vaccine-preventable disease. The Task Force’s recommendation is based on evidence from 32 studies (search period January 1980 – July 2015) that examined the effectiveness of vaccination requirements on vaccination coverage rates or changes in vaccine-preventable disease or illness.

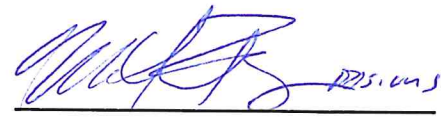
School and child care vaccine requirements encourage children to be vaccinated according to the recommended schedule of immunizations enhancing protection from disease transmission, serious illness, and death. Serious outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illnesses can occur in under-vaccinated populations. In 2022 alone, an outbreak of polio in New York and an outbreak of measles in Ohio had tremendous medical and financial impacts on the communities in which they occurred. There were extended missed opportunities for learning as exposed and unvaccinated children were required to stay home from school/child care to prevent further illness spread.

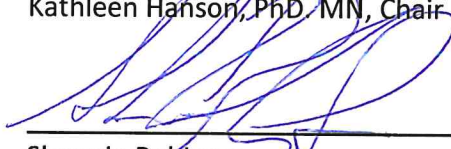
Scott County has benefited from the immunization requirements. According to 2021-2022 data, 94.2% of child care attendees and 94.3% of kindergarten through 12th grade students were fully immunized. This is consistent with the state percentage in 2021-2022, but is a decline from 97.4% in 2006-2007. This means that 5.8% of students (1,677) attending Scott County schools are under or unimmunized and both the county and the state have fallen below the 95% critical threshold for prevention of measles outbreaks. Without strong vaccine requirements, many more children will be in this category. High vaccination rates protect children unable to be vaccinated from exposures with serious medical and academic effects, since such students must often be excluded from school, or risk infection, when certain vaccine-preventable diseases are present.


Therefore, the Scott County Board of Health supports maintaining and strengthening Iowa’s child care and school vaccination requirements as a tool to reduce vaccine-preventable illness in the community.


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