

Following Up with Parents

It is the responsibility of school and child care staff to follow up on all children admitted while still needing required immunizations in the future. Schools also need to follow up on transfer students when awaiting arrival of records from prior schools. This means that each school, center, or family child care home must develop a follow-up system for these children and employ it consistently.

The first key to success is being very clear with parents or guardians that you must enforce the law and the basic rule of “No shots, no records, no school.”

Your follow-up system should include:

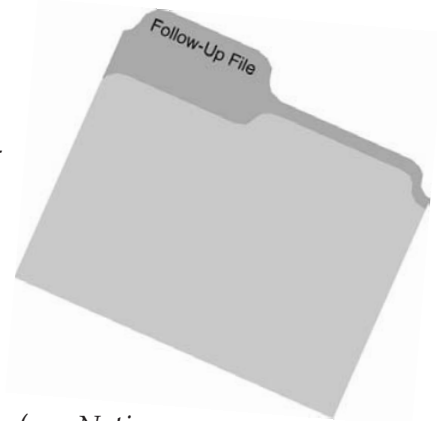
1. Keeping a list of exempt children to refer to in case of disease outbreak.
2. Reviewing your records monthly (see Systems 1-3 on the following pages).
3. Helping other schools by making sure you forward cumulative folders to the new schools in a timely manner, within 30 days.
4. Using the shortest interval to complete immunizations is encouraged (see *Table 2* page D-80). For example, when a conditionally admitted child is in the 6 to 12 month interval between doses of DTaP, target the six months date as your deadline. Notify the parents of the deadline six months after the previous dose, rather than waiting for the maximum 12 months to elapse.
5. Keeping in contact with the parents. Provide parents with the *Guide to the Requirements of the California School Immunization Law for Parents* (page C-59). If immunizations are needed, parents should be sent a *Notice of Immunizations Needed* (page C-63) letter at the beginning of the month in which shots or records are due. An exclusion date of no more than 10 school days after the deadline date should be assigned and noted on the letter. If schools miss the deadline date, the deadline date is reset with the notice date. If the parent does not come in with a record from a physician or other health provider, the law requires that the child (unless exempt) be excluded from further school/child care attendance until proof of adequate immunization is presented.
6. Excluding children who do not meet requirements by your deadline. Almost all parents comply with requirements when they know their child must be excluded. It is unlikely that you will ever need to actually exclude a child. If you need to exclude a child, experience across California has shown that in nearly every case, the student’s family quickly comes into compliance with the requirements and the child is back in school as a result. However, the *Notice of Immunizations Needed* and the documentation of your follow-up efforts will provide the information you need for due process.

Follow-Up Systems

Described below are three systems currently in use in various California schools and child care facilities. Choose whichever system is best for you.

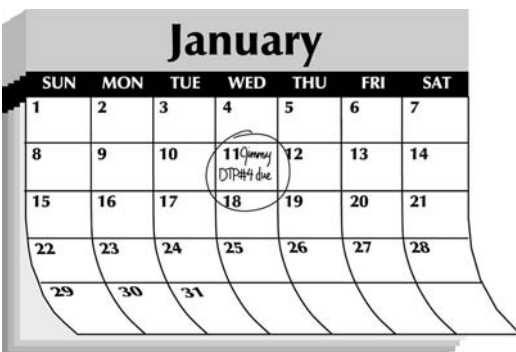
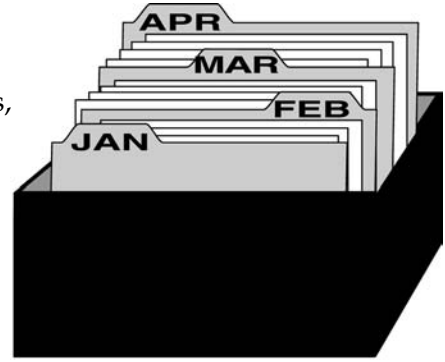
System 1 – Blue Card Folder

- Keep a separate file of the Blue Cards of children needing follow-up. For schools, however, because the Blue Card is part of the child's permanent scholastic record, make sure that it is transferred with the cumulative file if the child changes schools.
- Clip a note with the due date onto the Blue Card.
- At the beginning of each month, call or send parents a letter (see *Notice of Immunizations Needed*, page C-63) to remind them that shots are due and of the deadline date. Assign an exclusion date of no more than 10 school days after your deadline date.
- Enter immunization dates on the Blue Card when the doctor or clinic record is presented by parents to verify the child's immunization status.
- Repeat the steps above if additional immunizations will be needed in the future, until all requirements are met.
- Exclude students who do not provide evidence of up-to-date immunizations by the exclusion date.
- When no more vaccine doses are needed, remove the Blue Card from the follow-up file and return it to the student's cumulative file or the child care file for that child.
- When waiting for another school to send a cumulative folder and immunization record or Blue Card, include in the follow-up file a blank Blue Card with a note with the child's name attached to it. Identify on the note the deadline date for receipt of the record from the prior school (within the student's first 30 days at your school). When the cumulative record arrives from the sending school, review the Blue Card to make sure all required immunizations have been received. Below the Documentation Box, indicate this review was done. If the transfer student is from out-of-state, complete a new Blue Card. (Note: When students leave your school, forward the cumulative folder with the Blue Card to the new school in a timely manner.)



System 2 – Index Card File

- A card file requires 3"x5" index cards, a box to hold them, and a set of month index cards (January-December).
- For a child needing future immunizations, enter his or her name on an index card and list all doses which will be needed. Using the *Guide to Immunizations Required for School Entry Grades K-12* on page B-41 (or *California Immunization Requirements for Child Care* on page B-43), determine when the next dose is due and note the deadline date on the upper right-hand corner of the follow-up card.
- For a child whose immunization record is in transit from another school, enter the child's name and the 30-day deadline date in the upper right-hand corner of the follow-up card.
- File each follow-up card by the month the immunization or transfer record is due.
- At the beginning of each month, call or send parents a letter (see *Notice of Immunizations Needed*, page C-63) to remind them that shots are due and of the deadline date. Assign an exclusion date of no more than 10 school days after the due date. Be sure to document on the index card the date the notice was sent.
- Enter immunization dates on the Blue Card when the doctor or clinic record is presented by parents to verify the child's immunization status.
- Repeat the steps above if additional immunizations will be needed in the future until all requirements are met.
- Exclude children who do not provide evidence of up-to-date immunizations by the exclusion date.
- When no more immunizations are needed, remove the card from the file box.



System 3 – Calendar

A **calendar** system may work well in a family child care home or in a small school or center. Use a calendar with large spaces for each day to note the name of the child on the day an immunization is due. To preserve confidentiality, the calendar should not be hung where it is visible to parents or the public.