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Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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Be school ready with up-to-date vaccines

School will be back in session soon, and it's time for parents to gather school supplies and backpacks as well as make sure kids are up-to-date on their vaccines.

A new state mandate requires that all children entering transitional kindergarten, kindergarten and seventh grade be vaccinated, or in the process of being vaccinated, against measles, mumps, whooping cough and other diseases. Children in child care settings must also be immunized. In the rare instance when a child has a compromised immune system, that child's physician can provide a medical exemption.

"Getting children all of their vaccines is one of the most important things parents can do to help protect their children's health," said Susan Buckley, director of Public Health for the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services. "It also helps protect their classmates and the community."

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk of disease and can spread diseases to others in their classrooms and community—including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated, and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer and other health conditions.

Today's childhood vaccines protect against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, like measles and polio. "Thanks to vaccines, most of these diseases are rare in the United States," Buckley said. "But many still exist here and abroad, and can make children very sick, leading to missed school, missed work for parents and even hospitalization."

Vaccines are available from clinics and other local health care providers. For more information about immunizations, contact the Public Health Clinic at 707-268-2108. Parents can find out more about the recommended immunization schedule at shotsforschool.org.

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