



Connie Beck, Director  
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

## news release

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July 31, 2017

### Add vaccines to your back-to-school checklist

With summer winding down, it's time for parents to gather school supplies and backpacks and make sure their kids are up-to-date on their vaccines.

In July 2016, a new state mandate went into effect that requires 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.

"Vaccines are the safest and most effective way to prevent illness," said Michele Stephens, director of Public Health for the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services. "They provide protection from serious diseases that can be spread throughout the community—including to babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated, and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer and other health conditions."

Stephens said because of childhood vaccines, most serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, like measles and polio, are rare in the United States. However, many still exist here and abroad. "These diseases 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 [www.shotsforschool.org](http://www.shotsforschool.org).

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