

Families First Immunizations and Health Checks

Policy 23.08

Effective: December 15, 2023

Introduction

Parents and/or caretakers must ensure that all assistance unit children receive required immunizations and health checkups and provide verification at each Families First application and renewal. Failure to provide proof of up-to-date immunizations and health checkups will result in sanctions applied to the assistance unit's cash payment.

Scope

The purpose of this policy is to outline the immunization and health checkup requirements, detail penalties for non-compliance, and assist in removing barriers to employment by ensuring that assistance unit children are healthy.

Policy

Immunizations

All minor children in the assistance unit (AU), including children who are excluded from the grant, must have current immunizations and continue to receive all required immunizations. Tennessee follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for immunizations.

1. [Recommended Immunizations for Children from Birth Through 6 Years Old](#)
2. [Recommended Immunizations for Children 7-18 Years Old](#)

Health Checkups

All minor children in the AU, including children who are excluded from the grant, must have health checkups that, at a minimum, follow the [Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment \(EPSDT\) schedule](#) provided by the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH).

Exceptions

Children will be exempt from the immunization or health check requirement if:

1. The child's physician or TDH provides a signed and dated statement giving a medical reason why the child should not be given a specified immunization; or
2. The child's parent/caretaker makes a clear statement that such immunizations or health checks conflict with the customer's religious tenets and practices.

Good Cause

Good cause may be granted when there is a delay in obtaining an immunization or health checkup. Proof of the good cause reason must be provided along with an expected time frame for completion of the requirement. See [Families First Good Cause for Non-Compliance](#) for examples of good cause reasons.

Verifications

Immunizations and health checkups will be verified by the following:

1. Health Department records;
2. Shot records;
3. Medical records; or
4. Statement from a physician.
5. Enrollment in a public school or a licensed child care facility is presumptive verification of immunizations only.

Sanctions for Non-Compliance

1. An AU that fails to meet this requirement for one (1) child or all children in the AU and does not have good cause will have a twenty percent (20%) sanction applied to the AU cash payment.

2. The twenty percent (20%) sanction will apply when the AU fails to comply with either or both the immunizations and/or health check requirements.
3. The sanction will remain in effect until the AU is in compliance with the immunization and/or health check requirements.
4. The budget will have the twenty percent (20%) reduction removed the first possible month after compliance with the requirements is verified.
5. Failure to comply with this requirement will not result in case closure or application denial.

Supporting Documents

[Recommended Immunizations for Children from Birth Through 6 Years Old](#)

[Recommended Immunizations for Children 7-18 Years Old](#)

[Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment \(EPSDT\) schedule](#)

[Families First Good Cause for Non-Compliance](#)

[Families First Immunization and Health Check Procedures](#)

Definitions/Acronyms

Abbreviation	Expansion
AU	Assistance Unit
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
EPSDT	Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment
TDH	Tennessee Department of Health

Supersedes


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Approval History

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Clarence Carter	Commissioner	12/03/2023	12/15/2023
Danielle Barnes	Commissioner	01/29/2018	02/15/2018
Charles Bryson	Interim Assistant Commissioner	06/16/2016	07/01/2016

Revision History

Date	Version	Location of Change	Description/Reason for Change
12/03/2023	12/15/2023	Introduction, Policy Section	Renumbered policy, updated sanctions section, and immunization verification requirements
01/29/2018	02/15/2018	Policy Section	Minor language changes for clarity.
06/16/2016	0701/2016	N/A	New Policy

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