

Dear Parents:

Child care facilities must have a health record for each child that shows the child has received health screening and immunizations at the ages recommended by national experts. This protects the children from infectious diseases and helps make sure they are healthy and ready to learn.

The recommended schedule is available from The American Academy of Pediatrics on the Internet at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) or from your pediatrician. When the state inspectors come to license our facility, they check the children's health records to be sure that age-appropriate immunizations and health screening has been done.

To help you better understand why children need these health services, here is a brief description of each.

**Health History** Health history is the story of what has happened to your child so far. This information is important to alert the child care teachers about problems that might need some special attention for your child or what emergency personnel might need to know.

**Growth and Blood Pressure Measurements** By looking at how well your child is growing and checking your child's blood pressure, many potential problems can be found early and prevented from causing life-long disability.

**Physical Examination** By looking at, listening to, and touching your child's body, a skilled health professional can identify problems that might need further evaluation and treatment.

**Immunizations** Vaccines help your child's body learn how to defend against diseases without having to catch the bad disease. When children move about in the community and play with other children, they have many opportunities to catch diseases. They need protection that vaccines give them.

**Lead Screening** Any child can be lead poisoned by lead dust or chips from old paint in buildings, in the soil of playgrounds around buildings, or by mouthing lead-contaminated objects. Children with lead in their blood have no obvious symptoms until the poisoning is severe. Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, anemia,

kidney problems and other serious conditions like seizures, and coma. Since so many old buildings and so much of the soil where children play has lead in it, all children should have lead screening at around one year of age and again at two years of age. Usually, this screening is done on a small amount of your child's blood test. In areas where testing has shown there is no lead problem, the screening may be done by checking whether the child has been in places where lead exposure could occur.

**Anemia Screening** Anemia is a condition where the body does not have enough red blood cells in the blood. Red blood cells carry oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the body. When children are anemic, and the brain is not receiving sufficient levels of oxygen, learning can be slowed. The usual screening tests for anemia are the Hematocrit or Hemoglobin level done on a small amount of blood.

**Urinalysis** Testing the urine can show whether the kidneys are functioning normally.

**Hearing Testing** Children with impaired hearing may have behavior problems and may have difficulty learning to read and write. Hearing loss can result from being born without normal hearing or ear problems like wax build-up or repeated ear infections. To learn to speak normally, a child must hear. Usually this test involves wearing ear phones and doing something that shows the examiner that the sound was heard.

**Vision Screening** Children who are born with visual defects do not know they are not seeing normally. They must have professional vision screening so they can get help. Failure to have your child's eyes tested could be a missed opportunity to detect a common condition called Amblyopia (Lazy Eye) that affects approximately 2-3% of all children. When not detected and corrected early, this condition can lead to permanent loss of vision in that eye. The testing usually involves use of an eye chart and checking to see if both eyes work together by having the child wear polarized glasses to look at special pictures.

**Professional Dental Exam** Careful monitoring of your child's teeth for proper growth, cleaning and signs of decay can avoid serious problems. Regular dental check-ups, proper diet, the right amount of fluoride, daily brushing and flossing establish lifelong dental health for children. Baby teeth need care too. Healthy baby teeth hold the places for the permanent teeth to grow in, so. If you do not have a pediatric dentist, ask your pediatrician to refer you to one.