



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Meghan McGuire  
(803) 734-0867

### **NEW SET OF SCHOOL PREPAREDNESS TIPS FOR PARENTS**

As part of a public awareness strategy in conjunction with its Countdown to Kindergarten initiative, First Steps today released the second set of weekly school readiness tips for parents. This week's tips inform parents on required immunizations for school:

#### **No Shots, No School!**

South Carolina Law requires that children receive the proper immunizations before they can be admitted to a South Carolina public, private or parochial school. Simply stated, that means, "no shots, no school!"

Children can be immunized through their doctors or clinics, or through the local Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) public health department. Health care providers will then supply a South Carolina Certificate of Immunization. This certificate must be presented when registering a child for school.

Check with your doctor to ensure your child has received the required doses of the following vaccines:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis – This vaccine is most commonly administered in the U.S. as DTaP. If your child received this vaccine in another country, call the DHEC toll free immunization line at 1-800-27-SHOTS to determine if your child has met South Carolina immunization requirements;
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella (German Measles) – Vaccines for these diseases are commonly administered in the U.S. in one vaccine called MMR. Check with your doctor to ensure your child has received the proper doses;
- Varicella (Chicken Pox) – Children who have already had chickenpox do not need to get the Varicella vaccine. History of the disease must be recorded on the SC Certificate of Immunization;
- Polio; and
- Hepatitis B

If there are religious, medical or other approved circumstances preventing vaccinations, a child may be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption. An exemption may be allowed for a child who has not received all of the required vaccinations and is now "catching up" by receiving doses in accordance with DHEC recommendations. Most certificates of exemption are available from doctors, clinics, and local DHEC departments. Call DHEC at 1-800-27-SHOTS with questions.

**Source:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and South Carolina DHEC

- For information in English or Spanish on specific vaccinations, contact the CDC's National Immunization Program at <http://www.cdc.gov/> or toll free at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).
- For more information on DHEC's Immunization Program, call 1-800-27-SHOTS (1-800-277-4687).
- Local DHEC immunization departments: <http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/immunization/docs/contacts.pdf>

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*South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness ('First Steps') is a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative to help prepare children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed. Public and private support are combined through county partnerships to enable individual communities to address the unmet needs of young children and their families. First Steps' Countdown to Kindergarten is designed to leverage local resources to aid successful transitions of SC's most at-risk children into kindergarten, and to target early parent involvement and increased community awareness of the importance of school readiness. Nearly 1,300 children and their families will participate in this year's Countdown program. Over 120 certified kindergarten teachers in 34 counties are currently conducting a series of eight visits to each participating family's home to prepare the child for starting school and open the relationship with the child's family.*