

**Health Services Department
Northampton Public Schools
380 Elm Street, Northampton, MA 01060**

PREPARING FOR KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

The start of school is an exciting time for students and families. In addition to school supply lists and preparatory visits, parents often request assurance that their child's health needs will be met while at school. There are many components to good health, and students who are healthy are more likely to be ready to learn. Additionally, school can entry serve as a "safety net" to ensure that children have health services in place. It is important for the child's wellness and education that he/she has a primary care provider, dental provider and health insurance at school entry. *If the parent needs assistance in accessing resources, he/she should contact the school nurse.*

School nurses are key clinical health providers in the school setting and are a strategic link in meeting the myriad of health needs presented in schools. It is important for parents to learn to know their child's school nurse and to maintain ongoing communications regarding their child's health considerations. This relationship is essential to effective and successful health outcomes during the school day. *Outlined below are the health information requirements for entry into kindergarten.*

Physical Examinations

Each child needs to present to the school nurse *documentation of a physical examination* (that is less than one year old) prior to first school entry and at intervals of every three to four years thereafter. Please schedule this appointment to occur BEFORE THE START OF SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER. We also request certification from a dental provider that your child has been seen in the last twelve months.

Lead Poisoning Screening

Each child must present documentation of *lead poisoning screening* upon entry to kindergarten.

Vision Screening

Vision screening should be completed by the student's primary care provider upon entry to kindergarten (within the previous 12 months), or within 30 days of the start of the school year; certification that kindergarteners have passed acuity (ability to see objects far away) and stereopsis (how well two eyes work together) screenings is required.

Immunizations

Immunizations are a vital communicable disease control mechanism, and state regulations require each child to meet grade entry immunization requirements, and for *documentation of immunizations* to be provided to the school nurse:

Kindergarten entry	
Hepatitis B	3 doses
DTaP/DTP	5 doses
Polio	4 doses
MMR	2 doses
Varicella	2 doses

Medication Administration

When a child requires short-term or long-term medication during the school day, parents are required to contact the school nurse and provide (a) physician's order, (b) parental consent and (c) medication (30 days supply).

Children with Special Health Care Needs

If a child has asthma, allergies, diabetes, seizures, attention deficit disorder, or any other condition requiring special health services in the school and/or is assisted with medical technology, etc., it is vital that the parent meet with the school nurse and develop an Individual Health Care Plan prior to school entry. Physician's orders for care in school will need to be shared with the school nurse. For complex care requiring a team approach, a team meeting before school entry is recommended with the goal that services are in place prior to the start of school so the child is ready to learn.

Emergency Planning

School systems require parents to complete *Emergency Contact information* annually. This is vital information that should be updated whenever changes in contact information occur. There are potentially many emergency circumstances which impact schools. Community emergency planning procedures are developed locally, and it is important for parents to know their specific school/community policies and how they would be notified should an emergency occur.

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RE M I N D E R!

Bring Immunization History to Kindergarten Registration

The following immunizations are required for **all** students entering **kindergarten**:

- 5 doses of DtaP/DTP vaccine;
- 4 doses of polio vaccine;
- 2 doses of MMR vaccine;
- 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine; and
- 2 doses of varicella vaccine **or** a physician-certified reliable history of chickenpox disease.

YOU WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED TO PRESENT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- Physical exam within the last year **with** vision screening and lead test.
- Dental Certificate