Department of Communities' view on children in care receiving the COVID-19 vaccination

All children in the Department of Communities CEO's care, who are aged between 5 and 17 years of age, are strongly encouraged to have the COVID-19 vaccination, unless there are contraindications on medical advice. This applies to children who are in provisional protection and care; under a protection order (until 18) or protection order (time limited).

The reasons for getting COVID-19 vaccinations are:

- Health advice recommends all Western Australians get the COVID-19 vaccine when they are eligible.
- All Western Australians aged 5 years and over are eligible for free COVID-19 vaccination.
- Vaccination of young people provides direct protection against COVID-19 illness. This protects others and helps reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community.
- Being vaccinated significantly reduces the impacts of severe COVID-19 disease and helps keep families and communities safe.

Frequently Asked Questions that are relevant to children and adolescents can be found at COVID-19 vaccine FAQs (healthywa.wa.gov.au). A range of questions are covered under these topics:

- Vaccination for children and adolescents
- Vaccine consent for 5-11 year olds
- Vaccine consent for 12-15 year olds
- Vaccine consent for 16-17 year olds

Where do children in care get their COVID-19 vaccination?

Vaccinations can be obtained from state run vaccination clinics, Aboriginal Medical Services, pharmacies, or General Practitioners.

Older children (i.e. those children determined Gillick Competent) should consult with their GP before receiving the vaccination. This is particularly important for those who have a medical condition/s as their GP has a good understanding of the child's medical needs.

If the child's school is offering a COVID-19 vaccination program, then this option is also available. The school will provide a consent form to the legal guardian for completion. This is the same form as the one here: https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/~/media/Corp/Documents/Health-for/Infectious-disease/COVID19/Vaccination/COVID19-Vaccine-Consent-Form-General-Public.pdf

How do children in care book their COVID-19 vaccination appointments?

Appointments for children aged 5-15 years can be booked by their foster carer or case worker.

Children aged 16-18 years can book their own appointments. Their foster carer or case worker can assist them to do so.

Who gives consent for children in care to receive COVID-19 vaccination?

If the child is aged 12 to 15 years of age, as the delegated legal guardian the case worker needs to sign the consent form or be available on the phone to give verbal consent.

A consent form can be downloaded through the [WA Health COVID-19 Vaccination Students Consent Form (healthywa.wa.gov.au)](healthywa.wa.gov.au). This is also accessible under 'related resources' in CPM chapter 3.2.8 Medical or dental treatment – including immunisations.

In most cases, children aged 16 or 17 years who have the intellectual capacity to provide valid consent, refer to [COVID-19 vaccine FAQs (healthywa.wa.gov.au)](healthywa.wa.gov.au) for information on consent requirements.

Does an adult need to attend the clinic appointment with a 12-15 year old?

Yes. The foster carer or the case worker must attend the appointment with the child. Another person over 18 years of age who has the signed consent form can accompany the child if the carer or case worker is not available.

Where do I save the COVID-19 vaccination digital certificate for the child in care?

A copy of the COVID-19 vaccination certificate should be saved in the Child History File.

For information on how to get the vaccination certificate, refer to: https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/getting-help-during-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-vaccinations/how-get-proof

Department of Communities' view on foster carers or family carers receiving the COVID-19 vaccination

Currently foster carers or family carers are not mandated to get the COVID-19 vaccinations.

Foster carers and family carers are strongly encouraged to have the COVID-19 vaccination for a number of reasons including:

- Health advice recommends all Western Australians get the COVID-19 vaccine when they are eligible.
- All Western Australians aged 5 years and over are eligible for free COVID-19 vaccination.
- Vaccination provides direct protection against COVID-19 illness. This protects others and helps reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community.
- Being vaccinated significantly reduces the impacts of severe COVID-19 disease and helps keep families and communities safe.

Refer to WA Health's website for further information ([COVID-19 vaccine FAQs (healthywa.wa.gov.au)](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au)