

POSITION STATEMENT OF THE MIDDLE-BROOK REGIONAL HEALTH
COMMISSION ON IMMUNIZATION OF PUPILS IN SCHOOL

Adopted 30 September 2009

“Perhaps the greatest success story in public health is the reduction of infectious diseases resulting from the use of vaccines. Routine immunization has eradicated smallpox from the globe and led to the near elimination of wild polio virus. Vaccines have reduced some preventable infectious diseases to an all-time low, and now few people experience the devastating effects of measles, pertussis, and other illnesses.” (CDC) In fact, immunization against communicable disease, particularly childhood immunization, is considered one of the ten greatest achievements of public health in the 20th Century. It is recognized as one of the means by which public health has extended the average life span by 25 years over the last century.

Unfortunately, immunizations are not always viewed as being beneficial. Immunizations, like any medication, can cause adverse events. However, a decision not to immunize a child also involves risk. It is a decision to put the child and others who come into contact with him or her at risk of contracting a disease that could be dangerous or deadly. Consider measles. One out of 30 children with measles develops pneumonia. For every 1,000 children who get the disease, one or two will die from it. Thanks to vaccines, we have few cases of measles in the U.S. today. However, the disease is extremely contagious, and each year dozens of cases are imported from abroad into the U.S., threatening the health of people who have not been vaccinated and those for whom the vaccine was not effective.

There are some who are concerned about a relationship between vaccines and autism. The Health Resources and Services Administration, which oversees the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act, has issued the following statement: “HRSA has reviewed the scientific information concerning the allegation that vaccines cause autism and has found no credible evidence to support the claim. Accordingly, in every claim submitted under the Act, HRSA has maintained and continues to maintain the position that vaccines do not cause autism, and has never concluded in any case that autism was caused by vaccination.” Several scientific studies have concluded there is no link between autism and vaccines.

The Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website states: “The medical and scientific communities have carefully and thoroughly reviewed the evidence concerning the vaccine-autism theory and have found no association between vaccines and autism. If parents have questions or concerns about childhood vaccines, they should talk with their child’s health care provider.”

The Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission strongly endorses the requirements of “The Immunization of Pupils in School” regulations, as enacted by the New Jersey State Department of Health and Senior Services (N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.1 et seq.), as well as the CDC Recommended Immunization Schedule and finds that strict adherence to the law is in the best interests of the entire community. The Commission further feels that compliance with existing regulations and recommendations will decrease the risk of communicable disease to the entire community and further promote one of the greatest success stories in public health, namely universal immunization programs.

Please visit the following websites for more information about the benefits of vaccination against communicable diseases.

<http://www.cdc.gov/about/history/tengpha.htm>

<http://www.immunizationinfo.org/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/basic/parents.htm>

<http://www.chop.edu/consumer/jsp/microsite/microsite.jsp?id=75918>

The benefits of vaccines hugely outweigh any theoretical risk.