



State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health

March 9, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This letter is to notify you that a child at Zachary Early Learning Center in Zachary, Louisiana has been diagnosed with chickenpox. This individual will not be attending school until they are well.

Chickenpox, also known as varicella, causes an acute illness with a rash. The time from exposure to the development of symptoms is 10 to 21 days. People are contagious one to two days before the rash appears and remain contagious until the last lesion has crusted over and healed. Should your child develop a suspicious rash, please keep them at home and have them evaluated by their physician.

The current immunization schedule recommends that all children who have not had chickenpox disease should receive a total of **two** doses of chickenpox (varicella) vaccine. The first dose is usually given at 12 months of age, and the second dose is usually given after 4 years of age. If your child is not up-to-date on varicella vaccine, it is recommended that they receive the vaccination as soon as possible and bring a copy of their updated immunization record to school.

If your child or anyone else in your household has a weakened immune system or is pregnant and has never had chickenpox or the vaccine, talk with your healthcare provider immediately.

Chickenpox is a very contagious infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus. It is spread from person to person by direct contact or through the air from an infected person's coughing or sneezing. It causes a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness and a fever lasting an average of four to six days. Most children recover without any problems, but severe illness is possible.

If your child or anyone in your household currently has symptoms that look like chickenpox, contact your regular health care provider to discuss your child's symptoms and to see if anyone in the home needs to be vaccinated. Anyone who has chickenpox should avoid contact with others who have not had chickenpox or who are not vaccinated against chickenpox. Sick children should not attend school, day care, work, parties and/or other gatherings until the blisters become crusted (about four to six days after the rash appears) or no new lesions appear within a 24 hour period. Keep all chickenpox spots and blisters clean and watch for possible signs of infection, including increasing redness, swelling, drainage and pain at the wound site.

Please contact the daycare to report your child's chickenpox, if he or she is or becomes infected. If you have any questions, you may contact the Louisiana Office of Public Health during business hours at (504) 568-2600 and after hours at (800) 256-2748. More information about chickenpox is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/varicella.html>.

Remember, it is important to keep your child up to date on all immunizations.

Thank you,

Louisiana Office of Public Health