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Call your Child Care Nurse Consultant (CCNC) if you have any questions about child health and safety, or any special training needs.



[www.earlychildhoodiowa.org](http://www.earlychildhoodiowa.org)

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# Quality Care For Kids

## A newsletter for Scott County Child Care Providers

By Jane Matzen, RN and Heidi Hotvedt, RN

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### Influenza (Seasonal Flu)

Getting an annual flu vaccine is the first and best way to protect yourself and your family from the flu. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. The more people who get vaccinated, the more

people will be protected from flu, including older people, very young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions who are more vulnerable to serious flu complications.

From July 2010 through June 2014, there were 358 influenza deaths reported among children ages 6 months through 17 years in the United States. National health survey data suggests that vaccination reduces the

risk of influenza-associated death by half among children with high-risk conditions (e.g. heart disease, chronic lung disease including asthma) and by nearly two-thirds among children without high-risk conditions. Flu vaccination is associated with a reduced risk of death of infants and children from the flu.

We all know how quickly the flu can spread among infants and young children in child care. Younger children are especially vulnerable because they have a limited ability to practice respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes), they share toys and have close interpersonal contact.

Preventing the flu is key to keeping children, families and staff healthy.

### Flu Prevention

Each year, an average of 20,000 children younger than 5 years are hospitalized because of flu-related complications like pneumonia and respiratory failure. Influenza causes more hospitalizations among young children than any other vaccine-preventable disease. **The single best way to protect against seasonal flu is for children and the adults who care for them to get a flu shot. Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone age 6 months and older.**

#### Also encourage children, parents, and staff to take the following actions:

- **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school/child care, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after use and wash your hands. If a tissue is not available, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve, not your hand.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects.** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.

Contact your health care provider to get your flu vaccination. For more information about flu prevention go to <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>