

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 1 - Early Childhood Education and Child Care

DEEWR Question No. EW1171_12

Senator Back asked on 16 February 2012 , Hansard page 15

Question

immunisation & exemptions in Childcare

Senator BACK: You have had instances where applications were rejected when children had not been immunised. Can you give me some background on that?

Ms Caldwell: I would have to take on notice the particular numbers of children who were not compliant. There is a staged approach to giving warnings to children until such time as their immunisation is done. It is only after a number of cautions that we ultimately need to decide that we should go further.

Senator BACK: Would you also give on notice the number of exemptions from immunisation granted.

Answer

The Department of Human Services has provided the following response.

For the period 4 July 2011 to 2 March 2012, Child Care Benefit payments in respect of 23,405 children were cancelled because immunisation requirements had not been met. The number of exemptions given during the same period was 16,557.

Children who are younger than 7 years old must meet the Government's immunisation requirements or have an approved exemption from the requirements for the family to be eligible for Child Care Benefit, and by extension Child Care Rebate.

Exemptions include medical contraindication, natural immunity, conscientious objection, or special classes of children as determined by legislative instrument.