

Provider Responsibility to Screen for VFC Eligibility

Screening to determine a child's eligibility to receive vaccines through the VFC Program must take place with each immunization visit, although the screening form need be replaced or updated only if the status of the patient changes. The patient eligibility screening record provides a means of recording parent responses to VFC eligibility questions. The parent, guardian or provider may complete this form. Verification of parent/guardian responses is not required. To maximize efficiency, providers may elect to incorporate these screening questions into an existing form; however, any revision must include the core screening information listed on the CDC-developed form and be approved by the state Immunization Program. Patient eligibility screening records should be maintained on file for a minimum of 3 years after service to the patient has been completed unless state law/policy establishes a longer archival period.

VFC Eligibility Criteria

Children through 18 years of age who meet at least one of the following criteria are eligible to receive VFC vaccine:

- **Medicaid eligible:** A child who is eligible for the Medicaid program. (For the purposes of the VFC program, the terms "Medicaid-eligible" and "Medicaid-enrolled" are equivalent and refer to children who have health insurance covered by a state Medicaid program)
- **Uninsured:** A child who has no health insurance coverage
- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** As defined by the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603)
- **Underinsured:** A child who has health insurance, but the coverage does not include vaccines; a child whose insurance covers only selected vaccines (VFC eligible for non-covered vaccines only). *Underinsured children are eligible to receive VFC vaccine only through a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), or Rural Health Clinic (RHC) or under an approved deputization agreement. (LHDs have MOUs permitting them to provide VFC vaccines)*

Children whose health insurance covers the cost of vaccinations are not eligible for VFC vaccines, even when a claim for the cost of the vaccine and its administration would be denied for payment by the insurance carrier because the plan's deductible had not been met.

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), known as Title XXI, enables states to expand health insurance coverage for uninsured children. Title XXI children enrolled in a separate Children Health Insurance Program are not VFC-eligible because these children are considered insured. Title XXI children enrolled in a Medicaid-expansion CHIP program are Medicaid eligible and entitled to VFC program benefits. Some states have implemented their CHIP programs as a combination plan with some children becoming Medicaid eligible through an expansion plan and some children enrolled in a separate CHIP. The Medicaid-eligible children are entitled to VFC program benefits, and the children enrolled in the separate CHIP program are considered insured and are not entitled to VFC program benefits.

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