

Unvaccinated children to be banned from WA childcare centres, preschools, McGowan says

By Eliza Laschon

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WA has joined a national push to keep unvaccinated children out of childcare centres and pre-schools, Premier Mark McGowan has confirmed.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull wrote to state and territory leaders in March urging them to adopt a 'no jab, no play' approach.

Mr McGowan responded by saying WA was likely to introduce laws that would ban unvaccinated children from childcare centres and pre-schools, and has now written to Mr Turnbull to confirm his support for the national policy.

"We're taking a tough but fair and reasonable line on this issue," Mr McGowan said.

"Our aim ... [is to] make sure that those people who don't vaccinate are then not eligible for some childcare and or kindergarten services provided by the state."

Currently WA parents can enrol their unvaccinated children in childcare and pre-school, but the new rules would prevent that from happening, unless the child was exempted on medical grounds.

Mr McGowan said that exemption would not extend to primary school which is compulsory education.

"What we're doing is signing up to a national arrangement whereby those levels that the state controls that are not compulsory, those children that aren't vaccinated won't be able to participate," he said.

The State Government said the number of fully vaccinated children in WA was at an all-time high of almost 95 per cent.

Health Minister Roger Cook said WA would facilitate the implementation of the national policy, and the Government was in the process of drafting regulations that would strengthen immunisation record checks.

"Every family will be worked closely with to make sure they understand the benefits and importance of making sure their kids are fully immunised," Mr Cook said.

Late last week the president of the WA branch of the Australian Medical Association, Andrew Miller, warned parents against joining a playgroup for unvaccinated children that was advertised on social media.

The Facebook post was shared to a closed community group.

Topics: vaccines-and-immunity, health-policy, access-to-education, child-health-and-behaviour, government-and-politics, wa

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PHOTO: Children must be vaccinated before starting at kindergarten or child care centres, unless medically exempted. (ABC TV)

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