

Kindergarten vaccines close to target levels: CDC

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But measles, chickenpox protection remains a concern.

(HealthDay)—Most kindergarten children in the United States are up to date on their vaccinations, a new government report finds.

U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) researchers looked at data from 49 states and the District of Columbia for the 2011-2012 school year and found that statewide levels of vaccination coverage among kindergarten children are at or very near Healthy People 2020 targets.

Healthy People 2020 is a 10-year agenda launched by the federal government in 2010 to improve the nation's health.

Among [kindergarten children](#), the median vaccination coverage in 2011-2012 for three vaccines—polio; [hepatitis B](#); and diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis ([whooping cough](#))—met the Healthy People 2020 goal of

95 percent coverage or higher.

But median coverage for measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) and varicella (chickenpox) vaccine were below the Healthy People 2020 goal of 95 percent. Colorado has the lowest rate of MMR coverage at 86.6 percent, and Texas the highest, at 99.3 percent.

Even though statewide levels of [vaccination coverage](#) are at or very near target levels, a potential threat remains from groups of unvaccinated children or locally low [vaccination rates](#) for highly infectious diseases, such as measles, the researchers said.

Last year, 222 cases of measles were reported to the CDC, the most in any year since 1996.

Exemptions from vaccination increased slightly, with Arkansas claiming the biggest increase in exemptions, up 3.4 percent, the investigators found.

The study, by Stacie Greby and colleagues at the CDC's Immunization Services Division of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, is published in the Aug. 24 issue of the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, a publication of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC urges parents to ensure that their children are vaccinated according to the recommended immunization schedule before they start school this year.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [childhood vaccines](#).

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