

Phases:

- Prevention**
- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery

Audiences:

- Administrators
- Teachers and Staff
- Parents/Guardians**

Communication #4
Letter/E-mail/Web: Protect Your Family with a Regular Flu Vaccine

(Date)

Dear (Parent or Legal Guardian),

The *name of local public health agency* encourages you and your family to get the seasonal flu vaccine every year during the regular flu season (fall and winter). A flu vaccine is the best way to protect against the flu.

It is especially important for all people at high risk for complications from the flu to get a flu vaccine. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people at high risk include: all children from 6 months up to 5 years of age, their caregivers, and healthy household contacts (including children); pregnant women; anyone 50 years of age or older; and people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions or weakened immune systems.

Research has shown that children play an important role in introducing and transmitting flu viruses in their households and in the community. For this reason, it is likely that flu vaccine will be recommended by the CDC for *all* school age children in the near future.

Seasonal Flu Vaccine and Pandemic Flu

Over the last few years you have heard or read information about a possible influenza pandemic. Since the pandemic has not yet occurred, and because until it does health officials won't know the exact strain of that virus, there is not currently a vaccine for pandemic influenza.

However, some research is suggesting that a seasonal flu vaccine may offer certain individuals some cross protection against a pandemic flu when it occurs, if the immune response triggered by the vaccine designed to protect against a seasonal flu virus germ also offers some protection against a germ that is a component of the pandemic flu. If this happens, getting a seasonal flu vaccine would not stop you from getting sick with the pandemic flu strain, but it may mean that if you get the pandemic flu, it would be less severe and less likely to cause death.

While there is no way to be certain that a seasonal flu vaccine will benefit you in the event of a pandemic, it is important to remember to get your seasonal flu shot in order to stay healthy now.