

Hints for Religious Exemptions to Immunization

Please read the text below before you download, print, or use the sample religious exemption letter and support materials provided in the following link:

[Sample Religious Exemption Letter and Supporting Documentation](http://vaccineinfo.net/exemptions/relexemptletterlaw.shtml)
(<http://vaccineinfo.net/exemptions/relexemptletterlaw.shtml>)

Refer to the statutes. The laws require that immunization must conflict with the tenets and practices of a recognized or organized religion of which you are an adherent or member. However, **the law does not require you to name a religion** at all. In fact, disclosing your religion could cause your religious exemption to be challenged.

Some schools and daycares attempt to require you to give far more information than required by law. You are not required by law to fill out any form letters from a school or daycare. The law allows you to submit your own letter and the letter only needs to meet the bare requirements of the law. Keep it simple; do not feel you need to describe your religious beliefs here as that also is not required by law. Have the letter notarized. Keep the original in a safe place and submit a copy to school or day care. It is a good idea to keep extra copies in a safe place, in your automobile, and to provide friends and relatives who watch your child with copies for unexpected doctor and hospital visits.

Many times, when a school or day care questions your exemption, they are merely unfamiliar with the law or trying to coerce you to go against your beliefs by deliberately misrepresenting the law. They are betting on the fact that you don't know your rights. Some parents have reported that some schools or day care centers try to require parents to submit a letter written by their pastor on their church letterhead. Some private day care centers have tried to say that they do not have to follow the law, but if they are licensed by the state, state laws apply.

If you anticipate unnecessary questioning, you may want to submit the copies of the statutes outlining the exemption requirements provided with the sample religious exemption letter above and politely inform the questioning authority that you have met the requirements of the law and show them. This may be especially necessary if the school or day care tells you you have to name or disclose your religious affiliation.

Sometimes parents find it helpful to request a copy of the school/daycare handbook or policies. Some schools and daycare facilities even have this information online. Then they copy the page that says the school or daycare does NOT discriminate for race, religion, etc. and highlight this statement. This can be attached to your religious exemption letter and the statutes.

NOTE: The state immunization laws do not at this time recognize personal religious beliefs or beliefs derived from religions not opposed to immunizations, but other laws and the constitution do. Please contact your state representative and senator and ask them to support changes to the law to rectify this problem. In the meantime, Click here on [Religious Exemption Alternatives](http://vaccineinfo.net/exemptions/relexemptalternatives.shtml) (<http://vaccineinfo.net/exemptions/relexemptalternatives.shtml>) if you have sincere personal religious beliefs against immunizations or religious beliefs against immunizations that derive from any recognized religion whose tenets are not against immunizations.

Valdez v. Katy I.S.D. (<http://www.libertylegal.org/cases.htm>) - A Texas family with a handicapped child was denied services for their child because of their religion. Current Texas law provides exemption from immunization on religious grounds but only if the parent is a member of an organized religion approved by the state. Liberty Legal Institute filed suit pointing out that the State may not prefer Jehovah's Witnesses or Christian Scientists over other faiths. The suit alleged that government discrimination against handicapped children because of their religion is unconstitutional. After suit, the district recanted and recognized the family's religious exemption.