Policy Opportunities in Children’s Environmental Health

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems

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Children’s Environmental Health Network
• To protect children from environmental hazards
• To promote a healthy environment
Children’s Environmental Health Network

Through:

Education

Research

Policy
A New World of Environmental Chemicals

- Estimated 75,000 chemicals in use globally
- Many are found in our bodies
- Most of those have not been evaluated for health effects on child development
- Growing concern about environmental exposures
How Children Intersect with Environmental Hazards

Children are particularly vulnerable to environmental hazards because:

- They eat more food, drink more water, and breathe more air than adults
- They like to crawl on the floor and put things they pick up in their mouths
Why Focus On Children?

- Since they are still growing and developing they can be more vulnerable to harm.

- Adults may suffer little or no harm from exposure to a chemical (lead, mercury, alcohol) when that same exposure can cause **life-long damage** to a child.
Our policies and programs need to:

- Understand what children are exposed to
- Understand health impacts on developing systems
- Limit children’s exposures
- Act with caution to protect children
CEH intersects with your domains of:

- Integrated high-quality health care and medical homes
- Early care and education
- Social-emotional and mental health programs
- Family support
- Parenting education
Environmental health is one facet of child development; impacts:

- Asthma -- #1 reason for school absenteeism (IAQ)
  - Preventing/controlling asthma means better school performance
- Ability to perform tasks requiring concentration, calculation, or memory (IAQ)
- IQ, learning disabilities and behavior (lead, mercury, pesticides, eg)
- Long-term risk of cancer and death (radon, air pollutants, plastics, treated wood, eg)
- Hormones; thus reproductive systems and learning (flame retardants, plasticizers, pesticides)
Health Care Providers

Are health care providers taking environmental health history?

- [www.cehn.org](http://www.cehn.org); click on “training manual”
- FREE download of all or part of the manual
Limiting children’s exposures chemical by chemical:

- Lead in toys/children’s products
- Mercury exports and products
- Plasticizers
- Fire retardants
- Bus idling
Limiting children’s exposures:

Improved public warnings

- Bad air days
- Contaminated fish (mercury, PCBs)
- Arsenic-treated wood, toxic toys, etc.;
Limiting children’s exposures by “site”:

- Advance notice of pesticide application in schools, public buildings, child care
- IPM -- even better
- Green buildings
- School siting decisions
- Pesticide drift
- Repair/renovation
School Environments

**EPA** resources for schools:

- **Healthy SEAT**: an assessment tool to help large districts or states identify school facility environment issues, and prioritize repairs, based on federal and state laws and policies.

- **IAQ Tools for Schools** helps schools prevent IAQ problems

- **School Chemical Clean-out Campaign** educates schools how to inventory and dispose of old, outdated, highly toxic, or explosive stored materials
School Environments

Healthy and High Performance Schools Act (P.L. 107-110):

• $25 M education program for state partnership grants
• National Priority Study and report to Congress

Healthy schools provisions of the High Performance Green Buildings Act (P.L. 110-140) ($10M authorized)

• create federal guidelines for school siting and for school environmental health programs
Child Care Settings

- 60% of the children below age 6 are enrolled at childcare and preschool facilities, spending up to 40 hours per week.
- Child care providers and staff do not receive specific training around environmental health threats.
- Only 12 states require environmental tests for lead, asbestos and radon in child care centers.
State Activities

• States can implement environmental health standards for child care facilities
  – IN Department of Environmental Management: Five Star Environmental Recognition Program

• Oregon Environmental Council: Eco-Healthy Childcare

• CEHN created HECCP and is collaborating with child care training organizations
CEHN’s HECCP merging with EHCC

Healthy Environments for Child Care and Preschool Settings &

Training includes 15 modules in environmental health areas such as:

- **Air Quality**: Radon, Nearby Traffic Areas
- **The Built Environment**: Physical Activity, Asbestos, Mercury, Mold, Lead
- **Chemicals**: Cleaning/Art Supplies, Pesticides, Plastics
HECCP/EHCC activities

EHCC
Current states: CA, CO, FL, ME, MA, MS, NY, NC, WA
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HECCP
Current trainings: DC, MD, Dallas/Ft Worth
EHCC available nationwide

Go to:

www.o econonline.org/ehcc

Click on:

Sign Up Here to Become an Eco-Healthy Child Care Provider
And download forms  --FREE
Understanding what children are exposed to, and related health impacts:

- National Children’s Study
- Research Centers of Excellence
- CDC Biomonitoring
National Children’s Study

• Largest/longest study of children’s health, environment and development
• Follow the development of 100,000 children in 105 locations across the U.S.
• From conception through age 21
• Now enrolling families
• For more information: www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov
CEHN Policy Activities

EPA now accepting comments on these pesticide issues:

• Pesticide drift: March 5, 2010
• Better protection of farmworkers and farmworker children: April 12, 2010
• Disclose inert ingredients: April 23, 2010

Federal chemicals policy reform (TSCA)
Global climate change
Supporting Federal programs
What can you do?

- Use existing resources
- Partner with your health departments
- Attend and promote EHCC/HECCP
- Support Federal programs
- Docket comments
- Join CEHN list serve