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# Policy Opportunities in Children's Environmental Health

## Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems

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Children's Environmental Health Network

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Children's  
Environmental  
Health Network



- To protect children from environmental hazards
  - To promote a healthy environment
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# Children's Environmental Health Network

Through:

Education

Research

Policy

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# 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

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# 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
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# 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
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# 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)
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# 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

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# Limiting children's exposures chemical by chemical:

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

## Improved public warnings

- Bad air days
  - Contaminated fish (mercury, PCBs)
  - Arsenic-treated wood, toxic toys, etc.;
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# 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
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# 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.oconline.org/ehcc](http://www.oconline.org/ehcc)

Click on:

**Sign Up Here to Become an Eco-Healthy  
Child Care Provider**

And download forms --FREE

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# 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](http://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

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# 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
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