



# Preventing Harm to Children: The Healthy Schools Movement

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# Presentation Objectives

- *Learn about*
  - Intersection of school environments & growing children's health issues
  - Need for removing environmental contaminants from schools
  - Incorporating child-sensitive standards into school design, construction, and siting for school facilities
  - Guidelines for purchasing housekeeping products
- *Discuss*
  - Benefits of public participation in the decision making process
  - Need for cross-discipline actions between health professionals, academicians, researchers, parents & education policy makers
- *Understand*
  - Resources available from Healthy Kids/Healthy Schools Clearinghouse
  - Coalition for Healthier Schools platform and forum for environmental health at school



# Background

- Knowing that
  - school environments can be damaging to children’s health
    - *“Indoor exposures can be 100-1,000 times greater than outdoor exposures”*
  - we do not know the full consequences of environmental exposures in children
  - there is no baseline research or metrics
- We have a responsibility
  - to protect children from potential exposure to harmful health risks in their schools

Institute of Medicine 2011, Climate Change, the Indoor Environment, and Health

WHO'S IN CHARGE OF CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AT SCHOOL? by Jerome Paulson and Claire Barnett.

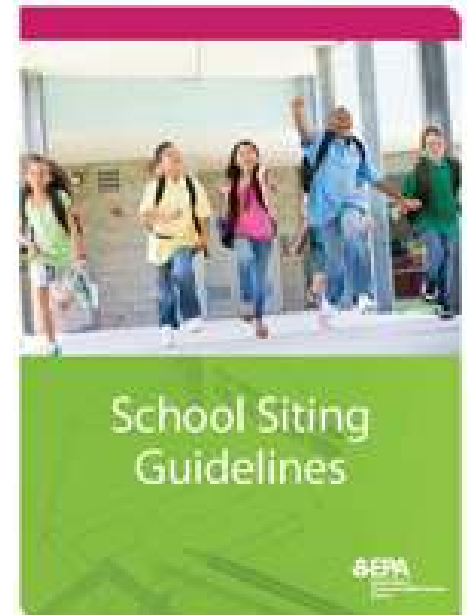
# Children's Health

- School environment can impair children's
  - Physical Health
  - Mood
  - Behavior
  - Development
  - Ability to learn
- Undercuts school districts' education mission
  - attendance
  - achievement
  - productivity



# US EPA Updates

- **December 2007:** Congress enacted Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA)
- **October 2011:** EPA released school siting guidelines
- **February 2012:** EPA released *draft* school environmental health guidelines & RFA for state agencies
- **October 2012:** EPA to release final siting guidelines and announce state agency grant recipients



# Removing Environmental Contaminants

- At any time, schools could have contaminants...
  - Mold
  - PCBs
  - PBDEs
  - VOCs
  - PVCs
  - Lead
  - Mercury
  - Pesticides
- Contaminants from renovations—  
few states and no federal regulations  
for occupants during renovation





# Siting, Design and Construction

- Need to *plan* for buildings to eliminate or minimize environmental health exposures
- Siting—assessments *prior to*:
  - lease
  - purchase
  - construction
  - renovation
  - closure
- Design—high performance schools
- Construction—building materials





# Green Cleaning & Green Procurement

- Children exposed to cleaning products through inhalation, skin contact, and ingestion
- Cleaning products linked to asthma symptoms, eye irritation, harm to organs, etc.
- ***Third-party certified*** cleaning and disinfecting products are greener, healthier, effective, and affordable
  - use disinfectants cautiously
- 11 states now require or promote green cleaning in schools



# Alaska Data & Policy Profile

No. School Buildings	509	State Grants for Construction	Y
No. Students	132,608	Integrated Pest Management Program	N
No. Minority Students	56,453	Indoor Air Quality Laws	Footnote 8
No. Students in Special Education Program	17,760	State School Green Cleaning Laws	N
No. Employees in School System	16,853	High Performance Green School Design	N
Percent of Youth 4-17 Ever Diagnosed with ADHD	7.07%	Statewide School Infrastructure Assessment	N
Percent of Schools with at Least One Inadequate Building Feature	69%	Percent of Children (18 or younger) Without Health Insurance	14.5%
Percent of Schools with at Least One Unsatisfactory Environmental Factor	80%	Percent of Children with Asthma (under 18)	*
No. Students At High Risk Daily	98,793	State Education School Facilities Office	Y
State OSHA Plan	Y		



# Cross-Agency Action

- Is what's in place serving the needs of children at risk of exposure or with exposures?
- What is the role of NGOs in protecting children's health in schools?
- Role of public agencies?
- Role of the public?





# Coalition *for* Healthier Schools

*...providing the national platform and  
the forum for environmental health at school, since 2001...*

Coordinated by Healthy Schools Network

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- New *Action Kit* and *Calendar* released in August 2012
  - *“for parents, educators, and activists to use to boost federal and state and local policies to address the dark, dank, dirty conditions of too many schools, and to improve children’s health and ability to learn, as well as improve staff productivity”*

# Healthy Schools Network/ Healthy Kids Clearinghouse

- Guides

- *Mold in Schools*
- *Asthma and the Environment: Fact Sheet for Parents and Schools*
- *Guide to School Design: Healthy and High Performance Schools*
- *Guide to School Renovation and Construction*



- Internet Resources

- EPA documents and materials from other organizations addressing children's environmental health issues

Visit [www.healthyschools.org/clearinghouse.html](http://www.healthyschools.org/clearinghouse.html) for these guides and more!



# What can you do?

- Form a state coalition
  - See Guiding Principles for School Environmental Quality
  - See Internet Resources for examples
- *National Healthy School Training Binder*. developed in 2003 in cooperation with national and state partners to help NGOs work effectively on school environmental health issues

# Healthy Schools Network, Inc.

... for children ... health ... environment ...  
education ... and communities ... Since 1995 ...

... information and education, research, advocacy, and coalition-building  
for parents, personnel, and organizations ...

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