

AASA and NSBA RESOURCE SHEET

Childhood Asthma and Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS)

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the asthmatic **conditions of between 200,000 and 1,000,000 children with asthma** are made **worse each year** due to exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS).
- ETS is a **risk factor for new cases of asthma** in previously asymptomatic children.
- According to “Secondhand Smoke and Children,” (CDC, 2003) approximately **43% of children aged 2 months to 11 years live with at least one smoker**.
- ETS is the smoke that is present in the air around a smoker. It consists of a diluted combination of **sidestream tobacco smoke** (the smoke emitted from the lit end of a cigarette, cigar or pipe) as well as **exhaled mainstream smoke** (the smoke that emerges from the mouth of the smoker). Inhalation of ETS is referred to as **‘passive smoking’ or ‘involuntary smoking’**.
- **Children have little control over their indoor environments**, thus they are at an **increased risk for asthma attacks** triggered by the irritating and harmful compounds present in ETS.

Possible steps to take:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend the following practices to eliminate tobacco use in schools:

1. Prohibit tobacco use by students, all school staff, parents, and visitors on school property, in school vehicles, and at school-sponsored functions away from school property.
2. Prohibit tobacco advertising in school buildings, at school functions, and in school publications.
3. Provide for communication of the policy to all students, school staff, parents, families, visitors and the community.
4. Require provisions for students and all school staff to have access to programs to help them quit using tobacco.

Adapted from “Environmental Tobacco Smoke: Measuring Exposures and Assessing Health Effects,” (1986), “Clearing the Air: Asthma and Indoor Air Exposures,” (2000), available online at www.nap.edu.

Resources:

- CDC, *Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction* <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00026213.htm>.
- National Association of State Boards of Education *Fit, Healthy, Ready to Learn – Tobacco Chapter* http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/FHRL_tobacco_chapter_web.pdf.
- National School Boards Association, *National Consortium on Tobacco Use Prevention Through Schools* <http://www.nsba.org/MainMenu/SchoolHealth/TobaccoConsortium.aspx>.