



# Protecting Children's Health

OCTOBER 2020

# Proclamation on Child Health Day, 2020

HEALTHCARE | Issued on: October 3, 2020



Children are one of life's greatest blessings. They bring boundless joy to families and enrich our communities. On Child Health Day, we are reminded of our solemn obligation to love and protect these precious lives, and we recommit to helping America's youth reach their full potential.

Our Nation is home to the greatest doctors and medical professionals in the world, and yet, the health of too many American children is compromised at the earliest stages of life. To end this tragedy, my Administration is taking action to empower doctors and families so that children thrive at every stage of development. To reduce the rate of infant death, we have invested more than \$100 million in the Healthy Start initiative, which particularly targets minority communities. We have also updated and improved clinical guidelines that healthcare professionals use for prenatal checkups, leading to safer births and healthier babies. As President, and as a father and grandfather, I will continue to work to ensure that every American family has the ability to raise healthy children, regardless of their income, education, or racial or ethnic background.

It is also vitally important to safeguard the mental, spiritual, and physical health of our children as they grow up. To this end, the First Lady launched her BE BEST initiative in 2018, an effort that has promoted whole-of-person wellness for children since its inception. BE BEST encourages character development and respect for others and provides education, awareness, and coping skills to help youth navigate issues they may face, including online safety and opioid and drug misuse. The positive habits encouraged by the BE BEST program have and will continue to develop future leaders, strengthening our Nation and affecting positive change in communities throughout the United States.

This year, we also celebrate 10 years of success in the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, which helps prevent child neglect and provides families with the tools they need to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy. The First Lady and I recognize the importance of creating a healthy environment in which to raise a child, and my Administration will always support children in need.

In recent months, we have also seen the effects of the coronavirus on the health of our Nation's children. While children are at a very low risk from the coronavirus itself, lockdowns and school closures pose significant risks to the health and wellbeing of our young people. My Administration recognizes that extended school closures cause students to fall behind academically and can have devastating effects on the long-term prospects for school-aged children. Many children, especially those from low-income and minority communities, rely on schools for resources that they do not have access to when schools are closed. Schools provide meals, counseling, physical activity, social interaction, and other experiences that play a crucial role in the development of our young people. For these reasons, lockdowns and school closures can often pose a greater risk to children than the coronavirus, and we must take action to both empower parents and students to take control of their education and equip teachers to best ensure the wellbeing of their students.

In recognition of the vital role schools play in the health of our Nation's children, my Administration has taken aggressive action to help our schools open safely. The bipartisan Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, which I signed into law in March, designates \$750 million — in addition to the \$10.6 billion already appropriated — in funding to the Head Start and Early Head Start programs, which help prepare low-income children for kindergarten. Furthermore, we have provided school districts with \$25 billion for personal protective equipment and other resources to lower the risk of the spread of coronavirus, and I have called on the Congress to provide an additional \$105 billion toward this effort. We have also provided every State with revolutionary point-of-care tests that deliver results in under 15 minutes. In preparation for the imminent delivery of a safe, effective coronavirus vaccine, last month I also directed the Department of Health and Human Services to issue guidance under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act which allows State-licensed pharmacy professionals to administer vaccines to individuals ages three and older. This action will greatly expand vaccine access, especially among children, and will expedite our ongoing recovery effort. As one Nation, we will continue our push to safely reopen while also protecting the most vulnerable among us.

Our Nation's children are the hope and promise of our future. Parents, educators, clergy members, mentors, and community volunteers all influence and shape the lives of young people. On this Child Health Day, let us renew our commitment to the vital role we all share in raising, nurturing, protecting, empowering, and encouraging America's youth so that they may enjoy healthy, happy, and fulfilled lives.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 18, 1928, as amended (36 U.S.C. 105), has called for the designation of the first Monday in October as Child Health Day and has requested that the President issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Monday, October 5, 2020, as Child Health Day. I call upon families, child health professionals, faith-based and community organizations, and governments to help ensure that America's children stay safe and healthy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-fifth.

DONALD J. TRUMP



Protecting children’s health is one of the most important responsibilities of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Over the last 50 years, the agency has worked to fulfill its mission by improving the nation’s air, cleaning up our lands, ensuring that Americans have safe water for drinking and recreation, and providing a cleaner, healthier environment—especially for pregnant women, infants, and children who are in the most vulnerable life stages. This brochure highlights some of EPA’s current initiatives to protect children where they live, learn, and play.

**“Our nation’s children are our nation’s future, so we need to ensure that their health is protected from environmental hazards. All Americans, regardless of their income or zip code, deserve a clean and healthy environment for themselves and their children, and EPA will do all it can to ensure this happens.”**

**- EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler**

EPA remains committed to improving children’s environmental health outcomes. Specifically, EPA seeks to:

- ensure that the air children breathe at home, school, and outdoors is clean, as children breathe more air, and more rapidly, than adults;
- ensure that children have clean water for recreation and that the water children drink meets protective federal standards;
- limit chemical exposures to children;

- remediate hazardous and toxic waste sites; and
- use research to stay ahead of emerging children’s environmental health challenges.

Protecting children where they live, learn, and play is a cross-agency effort that includes the Office of Children’s Health Protection, cross-agency offices, program offices, and regional offices. To learn more about what EPA is doing to protect children’s health, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/children> and <https://www.epa.gov/schools>.

## COMMUNICATING RISK

EPA is committed to advancing and improving the way it communicates health risks to the American public. By increasing our reliance on best practices and research from the field of risk communication, we are improving the consistency and quality of our efforts. Risk communication on children’s environmental health issues must account for children’s unique vulnerabilities due to their physiology, development, and behavior. Given that outreach to protect children is typically targeted to their parents, teachers, medical providers, or other caretakers, partnerships across these audiences is important. Providing meaningful, understandable, and actionable advice to the American public to protect children’s health and safeguard their futures is a priority for the agency.





## PROTECTING CHILDREN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As part of efforts to safely reopen schools, EPA continues to work in close partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), states, local governments, and tribes to provide up-to-date information to protect public health as school districts, private schools, and universities develop and implement COVID-19 re-entry plans for their students, staff, and parents.

EPA continues to add products to *List N: Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19* that are expected to kill SARS-CoV-2. When using an EPA-registered disinfectant, follow the label directions for safe, effective use. These directions include, but are not limited to:

- Always follow the product label to ensure safety. This includes following directions regarding the contact time, or the amount of time the surface should be visibly wet.
- Keep disinfectants out of reach of children. Children should not apply disinfectants, including pre-moistened disinfectant wipes and sprays. While disinfectants are powerful tools for controlling the spread of disease, they may harm children's health if used or stored incorrectly. The risk disinfectants pose to human health increases if the label is not followed.
- Only use fogging, fumigation, and wide-area or electrostatic spraying to apply EPA-registered products designed and labeled for use in this way. Unless the pesticide product label specifically includes disinfection directions for these application methods, it may not be effective when applied in these ways.
- Do not apply disinfectants to skin, food, or cloth face coverings. Do not mix disinfectants with other chemicals. Use disinfectants only at the concentrations specified in the label directions.

For more information on List N, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>.

If an EPA-registered disinfectant from List N is not available, diluted household bleach can be used to disinfect surfaces. Users should closely follow the bleach dilution directions on the CDC's website, including precautions. For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>.



EPA also has guidance related to indoor air quality and COVID-19. Increasing ventilation with outdoor air and improved air filtration, in addition to following other CDC guidelines, can help reduce risk from indoor transmission of the virus. Also, ventilation during and after cleaning, for example by opening windows or doors, is helpful in reducing exposure to cleaning products, byproducts, and any particles resuspended during cleaning, including those potentially carrying viruses. Sensitive people, including children with asthma, should avoid exposure to cleaning products, which can exacerbate symptoms. For information on ventilation while cleaning and disinfecting, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/ventilation-and-coronavirus-covid-19>. For information specific to the school setting, visit: [www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/healthy-indoor-environments-schools-plans-practices-and-principles-maintaining-healthy](http://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/healthy-indoor-environments-schools-plans-practices-and-principles-maintaining-healthy) and <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/i-need-disinfect-public-space-store-or-school-what-do-i-need-know>.

Throughout the COVID-19 national health emergency, EPA has worked to support the water sector to ensure that Americans can continue to rely on safe drinking water and critical wastewater services.



EPA also supported states and cities in taking proactive measures to ensure continued access to safe water for drinking and handwashing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many drinking water systems have discontinued service cut-offs, restored service to customers whose service was previously cut-off, and refrained from imposing penalties for nonpayment. For additional EPA resources on COVID-19, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>.



# EPA ACTIVITIES IN THE LAST YEAR—HIGHLIGHTS

## FEBRUARY 2020

Announced the Availability of \$39.9 Million to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-reduction-lead-exposure-drinking-water-under-sdwa-section-1459b>.

## MARCH 2020

Announced the Availability of \$26 Million to states for the Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. For more information on WIIN grants, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-reduction-lead-exposure-drinking-water-under-sdwa-section-1459b>. For more information on the Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water grant, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-lead-testing-school-and-child-care-program-drinking-water>.

## JUNE 2020

Released a Proposal to Reduce the Clearance Levels for Lead in Dust on floors and windowsills after lead removal activities. The proposed, tighter standards would increase the effectiveness of work done to remove lead-based paint hazards in pre-1978 homes and childcare facilities, known as abatement, and lower the risk of lead exposure by ensuring that lead-based paint hazards are effectively and permanently eliminated following completion of the work. For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/hazard-standards-and-clearance-levels-lead-paint-dust-and-soil-tsca-sections-402-and-403>.

## JULY 2020

Announced a final rule to reduce lead in plumbing materials used in public water systems, homes, schools, and other facilities. The Use of Lead-Free Pipes, Fittings, Fixtures, Solder, and Flux for Drinking Water final rule significantly limits the lead content allowed in plumbing materials used in new construction and in the replacement of existing plumbing from 8% to 0.25% in accordance with the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act of 2011. For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/use-lead-free-pipes-fittings-fixtures-solder-and-flux-drinking-water>.

Announced the Availability of more than \$4 Million to tribal consortia for the Tribal Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. For more information on WIIN grants, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-reduction-lead-exposure-drinking-water-under-sdwa-section-1459b>. For more information on Tribal Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/tribaldrinkingwater/wiin-act-section-2107-lead-testing-school-and-child-care-program-drinking-water>.

## OCTOBER 2020

Released the new curriculum, *Lead Awareness in Indian Country: Keeping our Children Healthy!* This robust set of educational tools support and advance on-the-ground, community-based resources to empower individuals to act within their own homes to protect their children and communities. The curriculum is a series of four modules which include lesson plans, worksheets, key messages, presentation slides, and activity sheets for children that community leaders can use to improve public awareness of the dangers associated with lead exposure and promote preventative actions. For more information, visit: [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead).



## FUNDING

### HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

In April, EPA released the Children’s Healthy Learning Environments Grant Initiative to support capacity-building around children’s environmental health in schools and childcare settings. EPA will award grants to New York State Department of Health and the Community Development Institute to advance children’s environmental health by providing training and tools for school occupants and childcare providers to reduce children’s exposures to environmental hazards. For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/children/childrens-healthy-learning-environments-grant-initiative-rfa-june-2020>.



### CENTER FOR EARLY LIFESTAGE VULNERABILITIES TO ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS

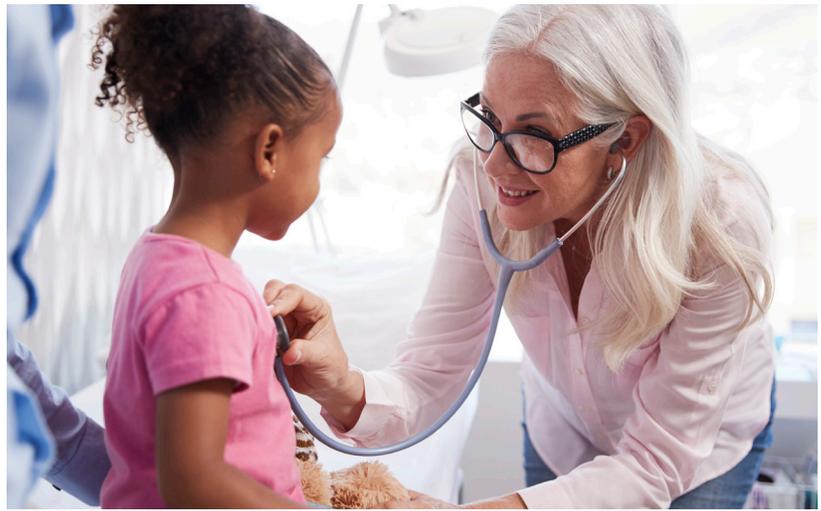
In August, EPA announced the request for applications to support a new Center for Early Lifestage Vulnerabilities to Environmental Stressors. EPA will support a transdisciplinary research center to better understand potential causal relationships among cumulative exposures to chemicals and non-chemical environmental stressors during early lifestages and modifying factors that result in adverse developmental health effects during early childhood. For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/research-grants/center-early-lifestage-vulnerabilities-environmental-stressors>.

# PARTNERSHIPS

## PEDIATRIC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALTY UNITS (PEHSUS)

Based at university medical centers in each of EPA's 10 regions, and supported through an ongoing partnership between EPA and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), PEHSUs are an interconnected network of environmental health specialists who provide medical information and advice on the prevention, diagnosis, management and treatment of environmental conditions that influence reproductive and children's health.

PEHSUs work with health care professionals, parents, community groups, schools, and federal, state, and local agencies to address children's environmental health issues in homes, schools, and communities. For more information, visit: <https://www.pehsu.net/>.



## THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH RISKS AND SAFETY RISKS TO CHILDREN (TASK FORCE)

The Task Force is the focal point for federal collaboration to promote and protect children's environmental health. Established in 1997 by Executive Order 13045: Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, the Task Force is co-chaired by EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar and is comprised of representatives from 17 federal departments and offices. The Task Force

addresses issues such as reducing exposures to lead, childhood asthma, and other issues pertinent to children's health. For more information on the Task Force, visit: <https://ptfceh.niehs.nih.gov/index.htm>. For more information on the Executive Order, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/children/executive-order-13045-protection-children-environmental-health-risks-and-safety-risks>.



## THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CHPAC)

Since 1997, CHPAC provides policy advice and recommendations to the EPA Administrator on a wide range of environmental issues impacting the health of children, such as, air and water pollution regulations, chemical safety programs, risk assessment policies, research, and risk communication. CHPAC convened in January and July 2020. For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/children/chpac>.

## FAMILY, CAREER, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS OF AMERICA (FCCLA)

In March, EPA signed an MOU with FCCLA to promote safer K-12 school environments. This partnership will give FCCLA the opportunity to establish children's environmental health as a priority issue for youth and will encourage high school students to use publicly available EPA environmental education resources in the planning and implementation of their projects. For more information, visit: <https://fcclainc.org/compete/star-events>.





Progress for a Stronger Future

[www.epa.gov/children](http://www.epa.gov/children)

[www.epa.gov/schools](http://www.epa.gov/schools)

[www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)