



## Child care walkthrough program

### Cause for concern

In 2013, 7.8 percent of children in Wisconsin had asthma. This prevalence estimate translates to approximately 100,000 children (1 in 13 children) affected by asthma. Children younger than age 5 have the highest hospitalization rate (21.0 per 10,000) and emergency department visit rate (71.5 per 10,000) in Wisconsin, almost three times higher than adults 35-64 years of age. Research has shown that exposure to indoor pollutants, such as secondhand smoke and indoor allergens, such as dust mites, cat, dog, mouse, cockroach and molds can all potentially make asthma symptoms worse. Asthma symptoms in children can be reduced by modifying the indoor environment.

### Program basics

The goal of the Wisconsin Asthma Coalition (WAC) child care walkthrough program is to decrease asthma symptoms in children by reducing exposure to environmental asthma triggers found within the child care setting. This will be accomplished by:

1. Identifying areas that may inhibit good indoor air quality (IAQ) and lead to asthma triggers.
2. Identifying low- and no-cost solutions for eliminating or reducing environmental asthma triggers.
3. Providing recommendations to each child care center on how to resolve any existing IAQ problems (e.g., reducing clutter or eliminating strong odors from air fresheners).
4. Increasing knowledge on preventing and controlling asthma attacks.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, there are five main triggers for asthma often found in child care settings which include:

- Secondhand smoke
- Dust mites
- Molds
- Cockroaches
- Other pests

Types of things we will be looking for include:

- Standing water in bathroom and kitchen areas.
- Strong odors from sources, such as cleaning products or secondhand smoke.
- Excessive clutter which contains dust, dust mites and other allergens.

## Expected outcomes

- Increased awareness of potential asthma triggers found within each individual child care center.
- Using low- and no-cost solutions to remove or reduce asthma triggers and improve IAQ.
- Reduce exposure to asthma triggers in the child care environment.
- Increase knowledge of child care staff in response to controlling and preventing asthma attacks.

## Tools available

The WAC provides a *child care walkthrough report* which lists the areas of the child care environment that should be viewed, what to look for and recommendations for improving each area. This list also can be used as a final report to the child care center. There also is a *child care walkthrough checklist* that can be used to take quick notes for each room that is viewed during the walkthrough.

The walkthrough will take about 2 hours to complete, depending on the size of the child care center. A child care staff member should participate in the walkthrough. It is strongly recommended that child care staff is made aware of the program prior to the walkthrough being completed.

At the end of each walkthrough, the child care center will receive a copy of the *child care walkthrough report*, with the identified areas where triggers were found and the recommendations to improve IAQ.

## References:

Banda E. et al. (2013). *Exposure to home and school environmental triggers and asthma morbidity in Chicago inner-city children*. *Pediatric Allergy and Immunology*: 24:8: 734-741

*Burden of Asthma in Wisconsin*. (2013). Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Wisconsin Asthma Coalition. [www.chawisconsin.org/asthma.php?pg=17](http://www.chawisconsin.org/asthma.php?pg=17).