



School walkthrough program

Concern

Asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism. In the United States, children miss an estimated 14 million days of school per year because of asthma. Almost half of all children with current asthma reported missing one or more days of school in the last year to asthma. Asthma management in the school environment is imperative as children spend over 1,000 hours a year at school.

Program basics

The goal of the Wisconsin Asthma Coalition (WAC) school walkthrough is to increase school attendance by reducing exposure to environmental asthma triggers found within the school. This will be accomplished by:

1. Identifying areas that may inhibit good indoor air quality (IAQ) and lead to asthma triggers.
2. Identifying low to no cost solutions for eliminating or reducing environmental asthma triggers.
3. Providing recommendations to each school on how to resolve any existing IAQ problems (e.g. limiting number of plants, regular care of plants such as tossing dead plants and leaves, and requiring watering trays).
4. Increasing awareness to prevent future exposure to environmental asthma triggers in the school.

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

- Animals
- Dust mites
- Mold/mildew/moisture
- Pests
- Secondhand smoke

Types of things we will be looking for include:

- Ceiling Stains indicating moisture.
- Upholstered furniture and stuffed animals which contain dust mites and dust.
- Excessive clutter which contains dust, dust mites and other allergens.

Expected outcomes

- Increased awareness of potential asthma triggers found within each individual school.
- Implementation of low/no-cost solutions to remove/reduce asthma triggers and improve IAQ.
- Increase school attendance by improving IAQ within the school.
- Reduce exposure to asthma triggers in the school environment.

Tools available

The WAC provides a *School walkthrough report* which identifies the areas of the school that should be viewed, what to look for and recommendations for improving each area. This list can also be used to provide a final report to the school. There is also a *School walkthrough checklist* that can be used to take quick notes for each room that is view during the walk through. You will need several copies to cover all the rooms in the school.

The walkthrough will take about one to two hours to complete, depending on the size of the school. A staff member (e.g. school nurse, janitor or administrator) should participate in the walkthrough. It is strongly recommended that the school staff are made aware of the program prior to the walkthrough being completed.

At the end of each walkthrough, the school should receive a copy of the School walkthrough report, with the identified rooms where triggers were found.

This program is adapted from the Minnesota asthma school walkthrough program.