

Asthma Friendly Environment Checklist

Head Start and Child Care centers have a great impact on a child with asthma. They spend almost as much time with you in this setting as they do in their own home environment. We want to help provide you with a simple sheet that guides you through a simple process to look at the environment to provide the healthiest environment for both the children in your care and your staff.

The items we ask you to look at will improve the air quality and environment for the children with asthma, allergies, and all other children in your care.

The Checklist is organized to help you look at your environment from all areas. This checklist covers the following allergens and irritants, which are commonly found in childcare settings.

Name of Trigger	Where it Might be Found	Possible Solutions to Reduce or Eliminate	Action Steps Taken to Reduce Triggers
<p>Smoke</p> <p>Secondhand smoke – Mixture of smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe or cigar and the smoke exhaled by a smoker.</p>	<p>Home or car where smoking is allowed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not allow anyone to smoke anywhere in the facility • Do not allow smoking within 15 feet of any entry ways or open windows • Encourage staff who do smoke to not smoke in their vehicles during breaks • Encourage families to have smoke free homes and vehicles as well. EPA has “Smoke Free Home” Kits available on-line at no charge • Do not light candles of any kind in the center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Center has a smoke free policy <input type="checkbox"/> No one is allowed to smoke within 15 feet of entry ways or open windows <input type="checkbox"/> Staff has been asked to smoke outdoors during breaks and off center grounds <input type="checkbox"/> Place smoke free signs in center <input type="checkbox"/> Ordered Smoke Free Home kits and distributed to all enrolled families www.epa.gov/smokefree
<p>Dust Mites</p> <p>Body parts and droppings.</p>	<p>On carpets, in upholstered furniture, in bedding and stuffed toys.</p> <p>Highest levels found in mattresses and bedding. Also found in carpeting, curtains and draperies, upholstered furniture, and stuffed toys. Dust mites are too small to be seen with the naked eye and are found in almost every home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove carpeting where ever possible • If carpeting can not be removed vacuum frequently using HEPA filtration vacuums • Wash all bedding weekly in hot water • Wash all stuffed toys weekly in hot water • Remove stuffed toys from sleeping areas • Store stuffed/cloth toys in plastic covered bins when not in use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Center is carpet free <input type="checkbox"/> Remove carpeting where ever possible especially in sleeping areas <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase a HEPA filtration vacuum and use weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Remove stuffed toys from sleeping areas <input type="checkbox"/> Wash all bedding and stuffed toys in hot water weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase covered plastic bins
<p>Dust</p>	<p>In all areas of the center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe all flat surfaces down with a damp cloth daily • Keep clutter to a minimum • Keep closet doors closed • Dust ceiling fan blades using damp cloth weekly • Replace furnace filters monthly • Dust only when children are not present • Keep window coverings to a minimum and wash frequently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use a damp cloth or disinfecting wipes to wipe down dusty areas and toys and immediately dry <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace filters are replaced/washed monthly <input type="checkbox"/> If possible, replace curtains or drapes with vinyl, plastic, wood or aluminum blinds

Name of Trigger	Where it Might be Found	Possible Solutions to Reduce or Eliminate	Action Steps Taken to Reduce Triggers
<p>Pests</p> <p>Cockroaches- Body parts, secretions, and droppings.</p> <p>Rodents- Hair, skin flakes, urine, and saliva.</p>	<p>Kitchen area, bathrooms, basements and closets</p> <p>Often found in areas with food and water such as kitchens, bathrooms, and basements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispose of unused and old cardboard • Keep kitchen area clean at all times • Clean up all spills immediately • Staff and children should eat only in designated areas of the facilities • Implement an integrated pest management (IPM) policy • Use gels, baits or other traps for pest control before sprays • Minimize use of aerosol sprays • Install door sweeps and avoid propping doors open • Keep outdoor garbage bins away from the doors and away from the building • Repair all water leaks • Keep clutter to a minimum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Place items that arrive in cardboard onto shelves or in plastic bins, dispose of cardboard <input type="checkbox"/> Store food in airtight containers <input type="checkbox"/> Keep garbage tightly sealed with a lid at all times and take out daily <input type="checkbox"/> Seal all cracks and holes in walls with caulk <input type="checkbox"/> Assign an IPM coordinator
<p>Mold</p> <p>Mold and mold spores which may begin growing indoors when they land on damp or wet surfaces.</p>	<p>Bathroom and/or kitchen areas</p> <p>Often found in areas with excess moisture such as kitchens, bathrooms, and basements. There are many types of mold and they can be found in any climate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate standing water • Seal all water leaks in facility • Keep humidity at appropriate level of 30%-50% • Wash molds off of hard surfaces • Use dehumidifier in basement during high humidity months or if area is damp • Vent clothes dryer to outside of facility • Empty and clean refrigerator and air conditioner drip pans regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use an exhaust fan or open window for good ventilation <input type="checkbox"/> Fix leaky plumbing <input type="checkbox"/> Remove cardboard from bathroom and kitchen areas <input type="checkbox"/> Seal all cracks and holes in bathroom and kitchen area with caulk <input type="checkbox"/> Wash any mold using a soap and water solution and immediately dry
<p>Pets</p> <p>Skin flakes, urine, and saliva.</p>	<p>Throughout entire house, if allowed inside.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibit feather and fur bearing animals in the facility • Clean the living environments of cold-blooded animals, such as fish and reptiles, at least weekly • If feathered pets present, pet cages should be located far from the air vents • Clean cages/living environments when children are not present • Eliminate any order pet may cause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If possible, remove pet from facility or keep outside <input type="checkbox"/> Keep pet out of children's sleeping area and off furniture <input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum carpeted areas regularly <input type="checkbox"/> Clean cages and living environments (i.e. fish tanks, reptile tanks etc.) weekly
<p>Odors</p>	<p>Kitchen, bathroom, all other areas of facility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend staff use unscented personnel hygiene products (soaps, perfumes, lotions etc.) • Dilute cleaning supplies in water • Do not use aerosol products • Use unscented cleaning supplies • Prohibit use of scented candles or room fresheners within facility • Remove spray air freshener products from the facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Dilute cleaning supplies, especially bleach to 1 part cleaning solution to 10 parts water <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase unscented cleaning supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Remove all air freshener products from the facility; areas such as closets, bathrooms, and offices <input type="checkbox"/> Use cleaning products when children are not present