



# Eco-Healthy Child Care

Eco-Healthy Child Care is a national program created by the Oregon Environmental Council to ensure that child care settings are as healthy, safe and green as possible by reducing children's exposure to toxins.



## Air Quality (Indoor & Outdoor)

### Health Effects of Poor Air Quality

Air quality significantly impacts people's health. The health impacts from exposure to air pollution (indoor and outdoor) can include: decreased lung function, asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, and even some types of cancer. Children are particularly vulnerable to air pollution because their lungs are still developing and they breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults do.

### Indoor Air Quality

Indoor air pollution is often 2-5 times greater than outdoor levels of air pollution due to a general lack of adequate air filtration and ventilation. The presence of dirt, moisture, and warmth encourages the growth of mold and other contaminants, which can trigger allergic reactions and asthma.

Fortunately, there are many ways to reduce air pollution in both your indoor and outdoor environments.

### 10 Ways to Improve Indoor and Outdoor Air Quality:

1. **Do not smoke on child care premises or near children.** If you do smoke, wear a smoking jacket; remove it upon entering buildings.
2. **Do not idle vehicles.** Car exhaust re-

leases pollutants that are harmful to health (especially to children) and the environment. Idling cars release even more pollution than moving cars.

3. **Prevent mold and mildew.** Reduce excess moisture by fixing leaks. Increase ventilation naturally by opening windows and using fans.
4. **Clean spills promptly.** For spills on carpets, clean and dry carpets ASAP to prevent mold growth.
5. **Prohibit the use of scented candles and artificial air fresheners,** which contain multiple chemicals, including dangerous solvents, to achieve their fragrance. Use diluted essential oils instead.
6. **Use biodegradable, least-toxic cleaning products** certified by *Green Seal* ([www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)) or *EcoLogo* ([www.ecologo.org](http://www.ecologo.org)). Why? Many ingredients in cleaning products can make indoor air unhealthy to breathe, irritate the skin and eyes, harm the respiratory tract, as well as damage the natural environment.

7. **Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** procedures to manage pests. IPM is an effective, chemically free and environmentally sensitive alternative to pesticides used to control pests with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment.
8. **Seal all solvent, adhesive, paint, and art supply containers** and store in a well-ventilated area.
9. **Use non-toxic art supplies.** Make sure they are approved by the Art & Creative Materials Institute, Inc. ([www.acminet.org](http://www.acminet.org)) or designated AP Non-toxic, or CP Non-toxic.
10. **Remove classroom pets with fur or feathers.** Pet allergens can trigger allergic reactions and asthma.

### Air Quality Resources on the Internet

- Third party certifiers for biodegradable, least-toxic cleaning products:  
[www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)  
[www.ecologo.org/en](http://www.ecologo.org/en)
- Indoor air quality tools for schools:  
[www.epa.gov/iaq/schools](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools)
- Indoor air quality issues for child care facilities:  
[www.azdeq.gov/ceh/download/indoorair.pdf](http://www.azdeq.gov/ceh/download/indoorair.pdf)
- California Air Resources Board, School Health:  
[www.arb.ca.gov/research/health/school/school.htm](http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/health/school/school.htm)
- American Lung Association:  
[www.lungusa.org/site/c.dvLUK9OoE/b.22542/k.CA6A/Home.htm](http://www.lungusa.org/site/c.dvLUK9OoE/b.22542/k.CA6A/Home.htm)
- National Asthma Education and Prevention Program: *How asthma-friendly is your child-care setting?:*  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/asthma/chc\\_chk.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/asthma/chc_chk.htm)
- Integrated Pest Management:  
[www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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