

DESIGNING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: RAISING HEALTHY KIDS



April 3-9, 2006

National
Public Health
Week



American Public Health Association

TOOLKIT



A Message from APHA

February 27, 2006

Dear Colleague,

The American Public Health Association is making plans for National Public Health Week 2006 (NPHW), which is April 3-9. We need your help to make the week a success.

For this year's NPHW, we are focusing on a "Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids." This year's campaign will focus on helping communities assess the current status of the built environment, determine the impact it has on children's health, and identify areas for improvement. NPHW will showcase communities throughout the week that have implemented solutions to address challenges in their built environment and can serve as models for communities across the country.

As part of this year's campaign, we are asking our partners to

- Encourage communities across the country to use APHA's Pop Quiz to assess the state of their local built environment and identify areas for improvement;
- Encourage local public health officials to learn about and implement model solutions that have proven successful in communities across the country; and
- Educate policy makers about the linkages between children's health and the built environment and about simple policy changes that make it easier to design healthy communities and raise healthier kids.

We have put together this toolkit to help you plan your NPHW activities. The enclosed messages, tip sheets, and sample materials can help make NPHW events in your community a success. We have also included national fact sheets and templates for local fact sheets to support your community efforts during the week.

Children benefit from a good built environment. Green spaces, availability of bicycle and walking paths, healthy homes and schools, and overall safety and aesthetics of a community play an important role in children's health. During NPHW, APHA with its partners will provide tools to create building blocks in developing healthy communities and healthy kids.

I hope that you will join us in this campaign to help America's communities to become healthier places for our children live.

Sincerely,

Georges Benjamin, MD, FACP
Executive Director



American
Public Health
Association



Local Partners Toolkit

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General Overview of National Public Health Week 2006

Across the country, our built environment - that is, the design of neighborhoods and man-made structures such as buildings, roads, and sidewalks - is having detrimental effects on the health of our nation's children. This year, National Public Health Week (NPHW) focuses on helping communities assess the current status of the built environment, determine the impact it has on children's health, and identify areas for improvement. NPHW will showcase communities throughout the week that have implemented solutions to address challenges in their built environment and can serve as models for communities across the country.

NPHW 2006 Theme

Helping communities improve the built environment and children's health

NPHW 2006 Tagline

Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids

NPHW 2006 Goals

- Encourage communities across the country to use APHA's Pop Quiz to assess the state of their local built environment and identify areas for improvement.
- Encourage local public health officials to learn about and implement model solutions that have proven successful in communities across the country.
- Educate policy makers about the linkages between children's health and the built environment and about simple policy changes that make it easier to design healthy communities and raise healthier kids.

Specific Topics

For National Public Health Week 2006, we want to highlight specific aspects of the built environment that are impacting children's health and promote solutions that are working across the country to make communities - and children - healthier.

- Monday:** Five Problems, Five Solutions
Overview of Impact of Built Environment on Children's Health
- Tuesday:** Surrounding our Kids with Equal Opportunity
Fresh Foods, Primary Care and Healthy Housing
- Wednesday:** Surrounding our Kids with Opportunities for Physical Activity, Sidewalks & Bike Paths, Neighborhood Parks, Spaces for Physical Education in Schools
- Thursday:** Surrounding our Kids with Safety, Pedestrian Safety, Lead, Poison and Mold
- Friday:** Surrounding our Kids with Clean Air, Public Transit & Roadway Planning, Chemicals & Environmental Toxins, Smoke-Free Communities

Pop Quiz

To help communities quickly and easily assess the state of their built environment, APHA has created a three-minute Pop Quiz. Available in hard copy and online, the quiz enables local residents with no public health expertise to rate their community's built environment as it relates to children's health. *For a hard copy of the Pop Quiz, please see page 5.*



Suggested Activities for National Public Health Week 2006

To help you plan for National Public Health Week 2006, APHA has developed the following menu of suggested activities to support your work to highlight the connection between the built environment and children's health and identify solutions to build healthier communities and healthier kids. All of these activities provide opportunities to generate local media coverage.

Monday: Five Problems, Five Solutions

Suggested Activity: Town Hall Meeting

To help communities assess the local built environment and share working solutions, you can stage a town hall meeting where local policy makers, public health professionals and citizens come together to discuss opportunities to improve the local built environment and kids' health. At the beginning of the event, you can ask the audience to complete the Pop Quiz to rate their community's built environment in several key areas. During the question and answer session, the experts can help interpret the results of the quiz and audience members can ask questions. **Included in this toolkit are a tip sheet for planning a town hall meeting, a sample agenda for a town hall meeting, and a sample media advisory to promote the meeting.**

Tuesday: Surrounding our Kids with Equal Opportunity

Suggested Activity: Community Grocery Shopping Event

Many urban and low-income communities lack nearby grocery stores with a good selection of healthy, fresh foods. If this is a problem in your community, consider planning a community grocery shopping event. Residents can gather and visit the nearest local store together, inventory the fresh food selection and create a "shopping list" of the healthy foods that are not available. Residents can then deliver the shopping lists and/or grocery bags full of unhealthy food to city hall in order to highlight the need for a community solution to a lack of healthy food options.

Wednesday: Surrounding our Kids with Opportunities for Physical Activity

Suggested Activity: Walk to School Day

Across the country, a lack of safe walking paths has left many children unable to walk to school and has contributed to rising child obesity rates. Walking to school can be an important opportunity for incorporating physical activity into an otherwise busy day. Organize a walk to school day where parents and elementary school kids walk to school in "pied piper" fashion led by a local high school marching band. This event can be held in partnership with local law enforcement to showcase their commitment to providing safe streets for kids.



Thursday: Surrounding our Kids with Safety

Suggested Activity: Safe Kids Fair

Lead, poisons and mold in homes and schools pose a threat to children's safety and health. In addition, pedestrian fatalities are the leading cause of injury death to children. Hold a Safe Kids Fair at a local elementary school in the evening. Invite students and their parents to attend to learn more about preventing exposure to toxins and walking and biking safely. Law enforcement officers can show kids how to safely cross the street and quiz parents on safe driving in school zones. Representatives from a local bicycle shop can demonstrate safe bicycling techniques. The local poison control center can staff a booth on poisons in the home and local environmental experts can show parents how to find and eliminate mold.

Friday: Surrounding our Kids with Clean Air

Suggested Activity: Park Your Car Day

Increased automobile traffic leads to higher levels of air pollution and more children with chronic diseases like asthma. Plan a "Park Your Car Day" that encourages everyone in the community to walk, bicycle or take public transit to get to work, school and community events. This event can be held in partnership with local public transit agencies.



TOOLS FOR PLANNING EVENTS:

Pop Quiz: A Tool for Assessing Your Community's Built Environment

APHA has developed this quiz that residents in your community can take to determine how healthy the community's built environment is for kids. The quiz can also be completed online at <http://www.apha.org/nphw/2006/quiz.cfm>. The quiz can be used during town hall meetings and other National Public Health Week events. The results, though unscientific, can help to identify opportunities to improve the local built environment and improve residents' awareness about the connection between health and the built environment.



TOOLS FOR PLANNING EVENTS:

Tips for Planning a Town Hall Meeting

By conducting a town hall meeting, you can bring influential members of the community together to assess the current status of the built environment and children's health in your community, identify areas for improvement, and propose effective solutions. At least half the event should be devoted to answering questions and an open discussion among the public and the experts.

To get started, the following tip sheet walks through the steps involved in planning town hall meeting and coordinating related media opportunities.

PLANNING YOUR TOWN HALL MEETING

For a meeting during NPHW, begin the planning process by early March to give co-hosts and sponsors enough notice and time to prepare. While your town hall meeting may only last 90 minutes, it will require weeks of preparation.

Form a planning committee. Contact local organizations in your area, such as health-focused organizations, children's advocacy groups, and state and local health departments early in the process and ask them to participate.

Convene a meeting of the planning committee. Schedule a planning meeting as soon as possible. Invite partner organizations to this initial planning session to discuss the town hall meeting. At the meeting, you should outline the theme, delegate responsibilities, solicit volunteers and discuss potential expert panelists. Solicit offers and ideas from partner organizations about what they can contribute to the town hall meeting, such as access to panelists, refreshments, photocopying, information outreach, and facilities.

Focus on improving the built environment and children's health. Incorporate the message of "Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids" into your town hall meeting. By creating a theme, you give participants and attendees a central focal point for discussion.

Consider making your theme more specific to issues facing your community, such as lack of sidewalks, unsafe crosswalks or high asthma rates. Or use a national policy theme and discuss how it applies to the health of children in your community, such as the obesity epidemic among children due to limited play space or barriers to buying fresh produce. For more information on national policy themes, visit the [need APHA guidance on what resource to direct them to - NPHW Web site?]

Select a time, date and location. Choose a date and time that is amenable to all of the major participants and does not conflict with other regularly scheduled community meetings. Select a public meeting place that is accessible to persons with disabilities, can accommodate a large group of attendees, and includes a stage or podium. A local public library, school auditorium, church, union hall or similar facility are ideal locations for a town hall meeting. Check with the site manager to ensure it has adequate parking and access to electrical outlets for microphones, cameras and other media equipment.

Secure your panelists early. Invite panelists that offer multiple perspectives on children's health and the built environment, such as experts from local universities, government offices, local nonprofit organizations or public health experts. The quality of town hall meeting panelists is a key factor in attracting an audience. Town hall meetings are not contentious debates, so select panelists that can "agree to disagree."



Several options for the panelists' presentation content include:

- 1) Sharing specific examples of how the built environment is currently affecting children's health;
- 2) Highlighting the good work that is already underway in the community or in comparable communities to address the built environment/kids' health connection; and
- 3) Calling for new initiatives such as a community-wide assessment of children's exposure to lead or a school district-wide effort to "audit" the pedestrian friendliness of neighborhoods where students live.

Given the compressed time frame in planning the event, potential panelists should be contacted first by phone. For panelists that agree to participate, follow up with a more formal, written invitation with the specifics of the meeting time, the length of their presentation, and the content you are requesting them to address. The town hall meeting should not include more than four panelists; three is preferable in order to leave time for questions.

Select a moderator. Choose a moderator that can keep the town hall meeting on track. He or she is responsible for beginning the meeting, introducing panelists, keeping the program on time and facilitating the Q&A session.

DRAWING A CROWD

Use all the communication channels available. Explore all your options for inviting the public to attend. Distribute stacks of flyers to local businesses and post them on local bulletin boards in public areas, such as schools, churches, government buildings, restaurants and libraries. Use your Web site and email list to publicize the event and encourage your partner organizations to do the same.

Invite other influential community members. Send written invitations to other community leaders who might attend. Even if they are not able to make it, they appreciate the invitation and it lets them know that you are actively working to improve the built environment and health of the community's children.

Invite the media. You should reach out to media about your town hall meeting to drive public attendance to the event and to garner coverage of issues related to improving the health and safety of children in the community. Here are key media outreach steps:

- Draft a media advisory about the upcoming town hall meeting. It must include the date, time, location, participants and a brief description of the town hall meeting. See page 11 for a sample media advisory.
- Contact local event calendars. Many media outlets compile community calendars of events in the area, especially smaller weekly or community newspapers. However, they need to know about your town hall meeting weeks in advance. To be included on these public calendars, send your media advisory via fax, mail or email to the community calendar editor at each outlet.
- Invite health reporters. Start by contacting reporters that cover health, fitness or policy issues at your local newspaper, television and radio stations. Use your media advisory to inform them about the issues your meeting will address and the panelists who will attend - often media will attend based on the quality of your panelists. Send the advisory via fax, mail or email, but do not include it as an attachment in an email; many reporters will not open unsolicited attachments. If you do not hear back from your media contacts in a few days, check in via phone to make sure they received the advisory and encourage them to attend the town hall meeting.



SETTING THE AGENDA

Create an agenda that provides a framework for participants and tells the audience what to expect from the program. In total, your event should last no more than 90 minutes. Each panelist should have approximately 10 minutes to speak and the moderator should facilitate a 30-minute Q&A session with questions from the audience. However, you may wish to allow high-profile speakers slightly more time for their presentation. See page 10 for a sample agenda.

MANAGING THE ROOM

Draft volunteers. Ask for volunteers to help manage the logistics during the meeting. Sources for volunteers include local planning and public health graduate school programs, church groups, rotary clubs or parent/teacher groups. Volunteers can help set up tables and chairs, work with panelists, ensure that equipment is running properly, greet attendees at the door and address any problems as they arise. Dedicate one volunteer to act as a liaison for all media that may attend the event. For a large meeting, ask your partner organizations to help recruit volunteers.

Set up early. Begin setting up the room two hours before your event. This gives you and your volunteers enough time to prepare the room and extra time in case of problems. Set-up items often include tables, chairs, signage, informational materials - including the fact sheets in this toolkit - refreshments, a sign-in desk and sign-in sheet, posters, risers, projectors, computers and microphones.

Record the meeting. Capture the meeting using a video camera. Later, you can refer to the video for specific quotes from panelists, future presentations and for the town hall meeting report form described below. Put one volunteer with audiovisual equipment experience in charge of monitoring both the video and audio quality of the recording.

Keep the meeting going. Start the town hall meeting on time, even if some attendees or panelists are running late. Keep your meeting on track by appointing a volunteer to give panelists time signals when their allotted time is about to run out. Ask some volunteers to come with prepared questions for the Q&A session, in case no other attendees have questions for the panel.

FOLLOWING UP

Say "thank you." Send thank-you notes to acknowledge the efforts of your panelists, moderator, volunteers, partner organizations and high-profile attendees in writing.



TOOLS FOR PLANNING EVENTS:

Sample Agenda for Town Hall Meeting

Designing a Healthier [INSERT COMMUNITY]: Helping Our Children to Lead Healthier Lives

Middletown Public Library Auditorium

April 3, 2006

6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

- 6:30 Welcome and Introductions**
Norman Carlson, Moderator
- 6:45 Prevalent Health Issues for Children in Middletown**
Dr. John Stocks, Chief Pediatrician, Middletown Children's Hospital
- 6:55 Design of Middletown Neighborhoods and Children's Health: Important Connections**
Dr. Jane Caster, State University School of Public Health
- 7:05 Making Communities Healthier for Kids: Legislation in the State Senate**
[STATE] Senator Janet Monroe
- 7:20 Q&A: "How can we design a healthier Middletown and improve our children's health?"**
Norman Carlson
- 7:55 Closing Remarks**
Norman Carlson



TOOLS FOR PLANNING EVENTS:

Sample Media Advisory

For Immediate Release
[DATE]

CONTACT:
[John Smith, (xxx) xxx-xxx]

**Local Leaders to Discuss Designing a
Healthier [INSERT COMMUNITY]
Town Hall Meeting Will Address Ways [INSERT COMMUNITY]
Can Improve Buildings, Roads, Sidewalks to Improve Kids' Health**

(City, State) - Local officials and public health experts will come together on [INSERT DATE] for a town hall meeting to discuss the many health issues facing children in [INSERT COMMUNITY] that are related to community design.

Organized by [INSERT ORGANIZATION] as a part of National Public Health Week, panelists will address the impact of the man-made features of our community - homes, schools, play spaces, sidewalks and roads - on our children's health.

"Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids" is the theme for this year's National Public Health Week, which runs from April 3 to 9. During the week, the American Public Health Association and [INSERT ORGANIZATION] encourage local residents in [INSERT COMMUNITY] to take action to change the built environment and improve kids' health.

**WHO: Dr. John Stocks, Pediatrician, Middletown Children's Hospital
Dr. Jane Caster, State University School of Public Health
[STATE] Senator Janet Monroe**

**WHAT: Town Hall Meeting on Community Design and Children's
Health in [INSERT COMMUNITY]**

**WHERE: [INSERT LOCATION]
[INSERT ADDRESS]**

WHEN: [INSERT DATE AND TIME]

For additional information on the town hall meeting, please contact [INSERT NAME] at [xxx/xxx-xxxx].

For tips on designing healthy communities, visit the National Public Health Week Web site at www.nphw.org.



TOOLS FOR MEDIA ADVOCACY:

Key Messages for Your National Public Health Week Outreach

We all want the children in [INSERT COMMUNITY] to be as healthy and safe as possible, but evidence shows that we are losing ground in this fight because of our modern built environment - our buildings, roads, sidewalks and other infrastructure.

[Customize by inserting local/state statistics about children's health issues. The statistics below are nationally-focused.]

- Although preventable, lead poisoning affects the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in the U.S. and continues to affect low income and minority children at disproportionate and unacceptable rates.¹
- The percentage of children diagnosed with type 2 diabetes has risen from less than 5 percent a decade ago to 30-50 percent today.²
- Pedestrian accidents are the second leading cause of injury-related death among children age 5-14.³
- The number of children dying from asthma has nearly tripled since 1979, while the number of school days missed due to asthma now tops 14 million annually.⁴

Healthy communities for children are on the verge of being engineered out of existence.

[Customize by inserting local/state facts/statistics about the built environment, such as the following examples.]

- In [INSERT COMMUNITY], we build 10 feet of road for every one foot of walking or bike path.
- Last year, [INSERT LOCAL SCHOOL NAME] began requiring all students to ride the bus or be driven to school by an adult after a child was struck by a car while walking to school.
- In [INSERT NEIGHBORHOOD], residents must travel more than five miles or take four buses to reach a grocery store with an array of fresh produce.

Balancing economic and other development needs with the need to create a healthy built environment for our children is a complex issue, but there are ways to achieve balanced solutions that help us raise healthier kids.

As a community leader, you have the power to create a healthier environment.

- Take the Pop Quiz to evaluate the state of the built environment in [INSERT COMMUNITY] and identify areas that can be improved.
- Join us for a town hall meeting to talk about how we can improve the built environment and our kids' health in [INSERT COMMUNITY].

1 "Children's Blood Lead Levels in the United States," Centers for Disease Control, <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/research/kidsBLL.htm>. "The Built Environment and Children's Health," Susan Kay Cummins and Richard Joseph Jackson, Centers for Disease Control.

2 "Many Obese Youth Have Condition That Precedes Type 2 Diabetes," National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/new/releases/obese.cfm>.

3 "Facts about Injuries to Child Pedestrians," SafeKids Worldwide, http://www.usa.safekids.org/content_documents/Ped_facts.pdf.

4 "Asthma's Impact on Children and Adolescents," Centers for Disease Control, <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/children.htm>.



TOOLS FOR MEDIA ADVOCACY:

Tips for Working with Local Media

You can use your local newspapers, radio and television stations to invite the public to cover NPHW and events in your community. Here are some tips for working with local media.

Explore Opportunities for Free Advertising

Talk with the advertising staff at local radio stations and weekly community newspapers. Often they provide free or discounted advertising for public service announcements. Ads and public service announcements help get out the week's messages on the necessity of improving the built environment and children's health and safety in your community.

Reach out to Health Reporters

You may already have relationships with reporters or editors at your local newspapers and radio and television stations. If you are unfamiliar with your local media contacts, health reporters will be the most appropriate for NPHW outreach. You can find these reporters and editors by calling each media outlet or visiting their Web sites. The media will be interested in the message of NPHW and local events planned in the community. Be prepared to discuss the challenges posed by the built environment and its effects on children. Try to give reporters as much notice as possible about your community's planned events for NPHW. [See page X in this toolkit for sample messages you can use when speaking with reporters.](#)

Use Local Facts to Tell the Story

Reporters will want local stories and facts for NPHW stories. If possible, try to provide a one-page document with local statistics on the built environment and the status of child health. How safe are roads and sidewalks? What is the incidence of childhood asthma and obesity in your area? [See pages X-X for fact sheet templates that you can customize with local statistics.](#)

Write a Letter to the Editor

Draft a short letter to the editor of your local paper to highlight the importance of developing solutions that improve the built environment and children's health. The letter should encourage local policy makers and the public to work together for the health of the community's children by participating in a town hall meeting or other planned community event. Submit your letter to the editor by fax, email or mail according to the preferences of your local paper. Information on how to submit a letter to the editor may be found online or by calling the newspaper's letters editor.

Submit an Op-Ed

Write and submit an op-ed to your local newspaper. Short for "opposite the editorial page," op-eds are commentaries that express an author's opinion on a specific issue. Such pieces are longer than a letter to the editor typically and are published on the page facing the editorial page. Contact your local opinions editor or check the newspaper's Web site for information on op-ed requirements. See page X for a sample op-ed that you can customize and submit to your local paper.



Notes on Developing Media Materials

All media outreach materials should include your contact information and details of your event. Materials can be faxed and/or e-mailed to media contacts. Avoid sending attachments in emails because reporters often will not open them. Edit all media materials very carefully for correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. Avoid jargon - remember that your audience will not be familiar with even the simplest public health terms.

Be Patient and Persistent

Reporters are often under deadline pressure. They may not answer your calls or emails immediately. However, if you don't hear from a reporter within a few days, don't hesitate to contact him or her again.



TOOLS FOR MEDIA ADVOCACY:

Sample News Release

For Immediate Release
[DATE]

CONTACT:
[John Smith, (xxx) xxx-xxx]

[INSERT COMMUNITY] Aims to Improve Youngest Residents' Health Public Health Week Activities to Highlight Connection Between Buildings, Roads, Sidewalks and Kids' Health

(City, State) - Like many communities across the country, [INSERT COMMUNITY] is struggling to balance economic and other development needs with the need to create a healthy community for our children. To explore solutions to improve our kids' health, community leaders plan several activities during National Public Health Week, April 3-9, 2006.

"We all want the children in [INSERT COMMUNITY] to be as healthy and safe as possible, but evidence shows that we are losing ground in this fight because of our modern built environment - our buildings, roads, sidewalks and other infrastructure," said [INSERT LOCAL SPOKESPERSON]. "Healthy communities for children are on the verge of being engineered out of existence."

In [INSERT COMMUNITY], levels of obesity, asthma and type 2 diabetes are on the rise in children. These serious problems are linked to fewer opportunities to exercise, increased air pollution and not eating a healthy diet. While a number of factors contribute to these problems, a lack of sidewalks and safe play spaces, more cars on the road and a lack of local grocery stores with fresh food play a critical role.

"National Public Health Week 2006 is about empowering [INSERT COMMUNITY] residents and leaders to make simple changes that will make our community more livable and healthier for kids," said [INSERT LOCAL SPOKESPERSON].

The theme of National Public Health Week is "Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids." During the week, [INSERT COMMUNITY] will hold the following events:

- **Monday, April 3: Town Hall Meeting. Residents,** health experts and community leaders will come together to identify opportunities to change the [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s built environment and improve children's health.
- **Wednesday, April 5: Walk to School Day.** Parents and students at [INSERT LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL] will join with the [INSERT COMMUNITY] police department to host a community walk to school day, highlighting the health benefits of daily physical activity.
- **Thursday, April 6. Safe Kids Fair.** The [INSERT COUNTY] Public Health Department will sponsor a Safe Kids Fair in the evening at [INSERT LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL]. At the fair, kids and parents will learn about pedestrian and bicycle safety and avoiding poisons and toxins in homes and schools such as lead, mold and carbon monoxide.

For more information on these events, please contact [INSERT NAME] at [INSERT PHONE NUMBER].

For ideas on designing healthier communities, visit the National Public Health Week Web site at www.nphw.org.



TOOLS FOR MEDIA ADVOCACY:

Sample Op-Ed

Healthy [INSERT COMMUNITY], Healthier Kids

America has a strong tradition of engineering feats that contribute to our sense of national pride - the development of Central Park, the Golden Gate Bridge and Mount Rushmore among them.

Here in [INSERT COMMUNITY], our [INSERT BUILT ENVIRONMENT LANDMARK/FEATURE] is a source of great local pride.

Yet, across the country the modern built environment - our buildings, roads, sidewalks and neighborhood design - adversely affects the health and safety of our children. Here in [INSERT COMMUNITY], the way we have designed our community has virtually eliminated walking and bicycling as means of transportation, contributing to increased rates of obesity and childhood asthma. [Customize by highlighting local problem, including local statistics if available.]

Healthy communities for our children are on the verge of being engineered out of existence. [INSERT COMMUNITY] children who live close enough to school to walk often do not because there are no safe routes between their home and school. Our heavy reliance on cars has contributed to increased pedestrian fatalities and asthma rates due to air pollution. Lack of access to fresh foods has led to increasing childhood obesity and disturbing health disparities in underserved communities. [Customize by focusing on local built environment issues that are highest priority.]

The good news is that we created these built environments and we are equally empowered to create healthier ones. Many communities are beginning to do just that, banding together to create better public transportation, bicycle paths and sidewalks, and more parks. These are actions that our [LOCAL/STATE] government can take now to improve the safety and health of our children.

This week the American Public Health Association is challenging communities across the country to build healthier communities and healthier kids. In our community, [INSERT COMMUNITY LEADER] and [INSERT COMMUNITY LEADER] are already committed to leading a town hall meeting on [INSERT DATE/TIME] at [INSERT LOCATION]. This meeting brings together our state representatives, public health officials, business leaders and community residents to assess the current state of our built environment and children's health.

Providing our children with more sidewalks and bike paths as well as safe places to play will create a safer and healthier environment for our children. With the support of the [INSERT DECISION MAKER - STATE LEGISLATURE, TOWN COUNCIL, ETC.], we can make these changes a priority in 2006 and implement workable solutions to benefit children's health for years to come. [Customize the ask to reflect your community or state's number one priority in improving the built environment.]

[NAME OF AUTHOR] is [TITLE] with [ORGANIZATION]. The theme for National Public Health Week 2006, April 3-9, is "Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids." Visit www.nphw.org to take a quiz to assess your community's built environment and learn about changes that can improve children's health.



TOOLS FOR MEDIA ADVOCACY:

Customizable Fact Sheets

The following five templates are provided for you to create customized, local fact sheets that you can share with the media, policy makers, leaders and local residents in your community.

The fact sheets will be most effective if you can fill in as much information about your community and/or your state as possible. We have inserted placeholders within the fact sheet templates to give you an idea of the kinds of facts, statistics and information that will be most effective.

If you're unable to locate local or state facts or statistics for each placeholder in the fact sheet, you can insert national facts and statistics contained in the national fact sheets that begin on page 32 of this toolkit.

The first customizable fact sheet outlines five problems related to the built environment and five solutions for improving kids' health. The template currently highlights the five problems APHA will focus on during the week. Feel free to change the fact sheet to reflect the five problems that are most pressing in your community or state and offer the five solutions that you wish to advocate for during the week.



Legislative Advocacy

National Public Health Week gives public health professionals an opportunity to act as advocates on behalf of public health with their public officials on the national, state and local levels about public health issues pending within their legislative body. Additionally, public health professionals can use National Public Health Week to send public officials educational materials regarding their theme. Public health professionals must use National Public Health Week as an opportunity to call, write or meet with public officials about issues that are important to public health on all levels of government. In this section you will find tips and suggestions on how to engage public officials at all levels of government during National Public Health Week.

Sending a Personal letter

A personal letter to public officials is one of the most effective types of communications a public official can receive. When sending a letter, be brief, tell them what you want, don't forget to give them your address and always ask for a response. Most public officials will not send you a response if you don't show that you reside in their district. Due to increased security mechanisms, it is recommended that you fax in addition to mail personal letters.

Sending an Educational Packet

Use National Public Health Week as an opportunity to educate public officials about the theme of National Public Health Week and the many public health successes. In the packet, you can include a personal letter, a general fact sheet, fact sheets on health disparities and information on issues that are important to your community.

Meeting with a Public Official

Meeting with a public official is the most effective way of advocating on your issue or education the official about your cause. A meeting allows the advocate to meet face-to-face with the official and tell him/her about the importance of your issue. Nevertheless, in many cases the official will not be available and you will have to meet with staff that handles public health issues. Don't take this as a missed opportunity, staff are very crucial in providing information that allows the public official to make a decision on how he/she will vote on a piece of legislation or view an issue. When you attend the meeting, make sure you have prepared talking points so you do not leave out anything important and provide them an educational packet on National Public Health Week.

Telephone Call

If you don't have time to send a letter or set up a meeting, make a telephone call. A telephone call is a quick way to let your public official know about your commitment to public health and the issue of health disparities. A telephone call can be made anytime. If you get voice mail, leave your message, address and request a response.

National Public Health Week can serve as a vehicle to deliver the public health message to all levels of government. Public health professionals must take advantage of this opportunity.



Sample Letter to Public Officials

The Honorable [Full Name]
[Room #] [Name Senate/House Office Building]
United States Senate/House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510/20515

Dear Senator/Representative:

As a constituent, public health professional and member of the American Public Health Association {organizational name optional}, I want to make you aware that April 3-9, 2006, is recognized as National Public Health Week. During this week, public health professionals and our partners celebrate the success of public health and inform the public about serious health concerns affecting Americans. This year, our campaign will focus on helping communities enhance children's health through improvements to the built environment, including determining the impact the built environment has on children's health and identifying areas for improvement. The built environment can be defined as any infrastructure with which children come in contact with on a daily basis including homes, schools, parks, roads, walkways and businesses.

In the 21st century, there are still many public health challenges affecting our population as the health and well being of a child depends heavily on the physical, social and the built environment in which they live. Challenges include access to medical and preventive health services, quality of and access to schools and housing, economic opportunities, social capital, air and water quality and opportunities for safe physical activity.

Healthy and safe communities for kids are on the verge of being industrialized and engineered out of existence. Across the country, development is taking place that directly impacts the health of our communities and especially our children.

- In too many communities, the option of walking or bicycling as a means of transportation has been virtually eliminated by community planning that is not pedestrian friendly. As a result, childhood obesity is on the rise. More than 9 million children are now overweight.
- Lack of safe walkways and bike paths combined with a heavy reliance on cars has contributed to increased pedestrian fatalities and higher rates of childhood asthma, now the number one chronic childhood disease.
- In many communities, children suffer from disturbing health concerns due to the glaring lack of nearby primary health care providers and grocery stores with fresh foods leads.

The good news is that we can create a healthier built environment by taking some relatively simple steps. Many communities are beginning to do just that, working together to create better public transportation, bicycle paths and sidewalks, and more parks. Attached please find policy recommendations that can make communities healthier for children. Children benefit from a good built environment - green spaces, availability of bicycle and walking paths, healthy homes and schools, and overall safety and aesthetics of a community all play a vitally important role in children's and community health.

I hope that after you take a look at the facts I have enclosed, you will consider looking at options to create healthier communities for children. I look forward to hearing your position on this issue and appreciate all of your hard work on these and other public health issues.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Address
Phone Number



SAMPLE TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Hello my name is _____ and I am a constituent and public health professional in your [State/Congressional District.] I am calling today to make [Senator/Representative] _____ aware that April 3-9 is National Public Health Week. During this week, the public health community and I will be focusing our attention on helping communities improve their built environment and children's health.

The built environment is any infrastructure with which children come in contact with on a daily basis including homes, schools, parks, roads, walkways and businesses. There are still many public health challenges affecting our population, especially children, as the health and well being of a child depend heavily on the physical, social and the built environment in which they live. Challenges include access to medical and preventive health services, quality of and access to schools and housing, economic opportunities, social capital, air and water quality and opportunities for physical activity.

We need [Senator/Representative] _____'s help to create more healthier communities for children in [State/Congressional District] by supporting that addresses challenges in the built environment that effect the health of our children. Healthy communities for kids are on the verge of being engineered out of existence.

The good news is that we can create a healthier built environment by taking some relatively simple steps. Many communities are beginning to do just that, working together to create better public transportation, bicycle paths and sidewalks, and more parks.

Rather than wait, Congress should act now to ensure that our children are raised in the healthiest environment possible by:

- *Calling for Federal dollars to go the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's chronic diseases surveillance and monitoring programs, as it pertains to built environment*
- *Calling for Federal dollars to go to CDC to conduct disability and environment surveillance and research to quantify the impact of environmental barriers on the health status of persons with disabilities*
- *Supporting regulations on how food is marketed to children*
- *Championing policy that promotes physical education programs in schools*
- *Supporting requirements for safe and routine accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians as part of the planning and development process of transportation and other development projects*
- *Defending initiatives to regulate and clean communities of lead, mold and other damaging toxins*

I look forward to hearing [Senator/Representative] _____ position on this issue. If the American Public health association or I can provide you with more information on this topic please don't hesitate to contact me.

Don't forget to leave your name, address and telephone number.



TALKING POINTS ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

ACCESS: Surrounding Our Kids with Equal Opportunities

1. The built environment is any infrastructure with which children come in contact on a daily basis including homes, schools, parks, roads, walkways and businesses. Health challenges include access to medical and preventive health services, quality of and access to schools and housing, economic opportunities, social capital, air and water quality and opportunities for physical activity.
2. The impact of the built environment has a greater impact on minorities and low-income communities. Without access to quality housing, disadvantaged populations are disproportionately exposed to lead, pest, air pollutants, contaminants and great social risk.
3. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help reduce the risk of many chronic diseases including cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and other diseases.
4. Access to primary and preventive health care are vitally important for a child's health. This care includes regular contact with a medical professional, and allows developmental and other health problems to be identified and treated early in a child's life. Primary care providers offer family-centered, comprehensive, coordinated care, including a more complete medical assessment when a screening indicates a child is at risk for a developmental problem.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: Surrounding Our Kids with Physical Activity

5. Chronic illnesses associated with lack of physical activity include obesity, asthma, diabetes, arthritis, depression, heart disease, several types of cancer, and high blood pressure.
6. Between 60 and 70 percent of Americans do not get the recommended daily 30 minutes of exercise.
7. Only about half of children aged 12-21 engage in regular physical activity, and children spend an average of at least one hour each day in cars.
8. The 1999-2000 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) showed that the percentage of children and adolescents who are defined as overweight has more than doubled since the early 1970s.

SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION: Surrounding Our Kids with Safety

9. Mixed-use communities generate four times as many walking trips as do auto-dependent suburbs. Streets designed for pedestrians rather than for cars, bike paths and walkways enable people to walk or bike to run errands, go to school, or commute to work.
10. Only about one-third of children who live within a mile of their school walk or bike there, compared to 70 percent of their parents who walked or biked to school.
11. Americans make fewer than 6 percent of their trips on foot, but pedestrians account for 12 percent of traffic fatalities, primarily because of street design that makes walking dangerous. Data suggest that one-third of car-accident fatalities are caused by poorly planned roads, not by driver error or mechanical failure.



ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS: Surrounding Our Kids with Clean Air

12. Researchers estimate that smog from traffic congestion can cause more than 6 million asthma attacks, causing 159,000 asthma-related emergency-room visits, and 53,000 asthma-related hospitalizations in a single year.
13. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of secondhand smoke because they are still developing physically, have higher breathing rates than adults, and have little control over their indoor environments. These health effects include increased rates of:
 - Asthma in children who have not previously exhibited symptoms
 - Increased risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
 - Increased risk of middle ear infections
 - Increased risk of lower respiratory track infections, including pneumonia and bronchitis.



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Designing Health Communities: Raising Healthy Kids National Public Health Week 2006 April 3-9, 2006

Whereas, the built environment (including our transportation, housing, employment, and commercial infrastructures), affects the health and safety of all Americans;

Whereas, the health and safety of children are disproportionately affected by the built environment, particularly when there are no sidewalks, playgrounds, or other safe areas for children to be physically active;

Whereas, the frequent design of transportation systems-combined with the lack of transportation choices-forces many families and individuals to depend on cars, particularly when many grocery stores, doctor's offices, and other essential services are only accessible by car;

Whereas, more than one-quarter of all trips are still one mile or less, including trips to pick-up and drop off children from school;

Whereas, air pollution from traffic congestion caused by poor transportation design increases the risk of developing asthma in children, which is the number one reason children visit the emergency room and miss school;

Whereas, the lack of exercise and poor nutrition are leading to epidemic rates of obesity in children, which is a risk factor for diabetes, high blood pressure, and other preventable diseases;

Whereas, a leading cause of childhood death is from car crashes while bicycling and walking;

Whereas, creating more places for children to safely walk and bicycle will have a profound impact on their health, as well as their overall future health;

Therefore, I _____ proclaim April 3-9, 2006, as National Public Health Week _____, and commend this observance to all our citizens.



National Fact Sheet:

Five Problems and Five Solutions

America has a strong tradition of engineering feats that contribute to our sense of national pride - the development of Central Park, the Golden Gate Bridge and Mount Rushmore among them.

Yet, across the country the modern built environment - our buildings, roads, sidewalks and neighborhood design - adversely affects the health and safety of our children. The good news is that we created these built environments and we are equally empowered to create healthier ones. Balanced solutions exist that create healthier communities and healthier kids.

- 1** **Problem:** Lack of sidewalks, safe play spaces, and access to fresh foods contributes to increases in childhood obesity and related diseases like diabetes. More than 9 million children are now overweight¹ and only about half of children age 12 and older engage in regular physical activity.²
Solution: Ensure that all communities have sidewalks, bike paths and safe places to play so that children can get the physical activity they need to be healthy. Provide incentives to businesses so that all neighborhoods are served by full-service supermarkets with a wide selection of fresh and healthy foods.
- 2** **Problem:** Poor indoor and outdoor air quality leads to asthma, now the most common chronic childhood disease.³
Solution: Site new communities where air is cleaner, away from highways and industry. Encourage public transit use to decrease motor vehicle emissions. Improve sub-standard housing so children are not exposed to indoor allergens that cause asthma.
- 3** **Problem:** At home, at school and outdoors, children are exposed to toxins that can cause serious diseases. For instance, 24 million homes in the United States have lead-based paint hazards, which can have a debilitating effect on children's development.³
Solution: Provide resources necessary to clean up toxic homes and schools to eliminate lead, mold and other toxins that poison kids. Pass smoke-free ordinances so children are not exposed to secondhand smoke.
- 4** **Problem:** Many children, especially those living in rural or low-income communities, do not have a nearby doctor or pharmacy to provide them with the care they need.
Solution: Provide incentives to bring or keep primary care providers in all neighborhoods.
- 5** **Problem:** The lack of safe places to walk, bike and play leads to preventable injuries in children. Pedestrian injury is the second-leading cause of injury-related death in kids.⁵
Solution: Build sidewalks, bike paths and safe playgrounds in all communities so that children can play with less risk of injury.

1 "Overweight and Obesity," Centers for Disease Control, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity>.

2 "Public Health and the Built Environment," American Institute of Architects, http://www.aia.org/liv_TP_health.

3 "The Built Environment and Children's Health," Susan Kay Cummins and Richard Joseph Jackson, Centers for Disease Control.

4 "Home-Based Child Care Lead Safety Program," National Center for Healthy Housing, <http://www.centerforhealthyhousing.org/html/leap.html>.

5 "Facts About Injuries to Child Pedestrians," Safe Kids WorldWide, http://www.usa.safekids.org/content_documents/Ped_facts.pdf.



National Fact Sheet:

Surrounding Our Kids with Equal Opportunity

The built environment can limit the access of children living in low-income areas, both urban and rural, to equal opportunities for growing up healthy. Designing communities so that all children have access to fresh food, primary health care, and safe housing is vital to improving children's long-term health.

Fresh Food

- Overall, there are fewer supermarkets located in low-income communities than in middle class neighborhoods or more affluent areas. A 1995 study of grocery stores in 21 metropolitan areas in the United States found nearly one-third fewer supermarkets in low-income areas than in higher-income areas.¹
- The problem of unequal access to fresh foods is more common in urban areas, although it can also be a serious issue in rural places. On average, there is at least one fewer supermarket in poor rural areas than in non-poor ones.²
- Low-income communities are more likely to be served by small convenience stores, liquor stores and fast food restaurants where the selection and quality of fresh foods are poor.³ For example, in Pennsylvania, a study found that the average large super market offered 66 fresh food options, while the average small store carried only 12.⁴

Primary Health Care

- Having access to doctors and other primary health care providers has long been a problem in rural communities. Of the 70 million rural Americans, more than 20 million have inadequate access to health care services in their communities.⁵
- Residents in low-income, urban areas frequently must travel long distances to see a doctor because there are no primary care providers in their neighborhood. For instance, recent studies have found severe shortages of primary care providers in New York City and Washington DC. In Washington, poor neighborhoods have three times fewer primary care providers than affluent neighborhoods.⁶

Healthy Housing

- More than 2.5 million households with children live in substandard housing. Of these, nearly one-third live in severely substandard housing.⁷
- Low-income children are more likely to be exposed to structural hazards in the home and more likely to have diseases such as lead poisoning and asthma as a result.⁸

1 "The Urban Grocery Store Gap," Cotterill RW, Franklin AW, Food Marketing Policy Center, University of Connecticut, 1995.

2 "Higher Prices, Fewer Choices: Shopping for Food in Rural America," Morris PM, Public Voice for Food and Health Policy, 1990.

3 "A Place for Healthier Living: Improving Access to Physical Activity and Healthy Foods," Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2004.

4 "No place to shop: food access lacking in the inner city," Weinberg Z., Race, Poverty & the Environment, Winter 2000.

5 "HHS Programs to Protect and Enhance Rural Health," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002, <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2002pres/rural.html>.

6 "Health Care: An Unmet Need in New York's Low-Income Neighborhoods," Community Service Society, 2000, <http://www.ccsny.org/pubs/issuebrief/ho17.htm> and "Final Report of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Health Care Reform Implementation," 1995.

7 "Basic Facts on Assisted Housing," Children's Defense Fund, www.childrensdefense.org/familyincome/housing/basicfacts.aspx.

8 "The Built Environment and Children's Health," Susan Kay Commins and Richard Joseph Jackson, Centers for Disease Control.



National Fact Sheet:

Surrounding Our Kids with the Opportunity for Physical Activity

Opportunities for children to get safe and healthy physical activity have largely been engineered out of our communities. Multi-lane roads have replaced sidewalks and bike paths and play spaces are far away or unsafe. The result is that children's obesity and disease rates are rising. Designing communities so that children have ample opportunity for physical activity is vital to improving children's long-term health.

Sidewalks and Bike Paths

- Seventy percent of Americans live in areas where there are no bike paths or lanes.¹
- According to a 2002 survey, nearly one-third of Americans polled live in communities without sidewalks.²
- Children's opportunities to walk to school or ride a bike safely are limited when communities forsake sidewalks and bike paths for high-speed roads.
- Only one-quarter of children walk or bike to school. Even among children living less than one mile from school, less than one-third walk or bike to get there.³

Play Spaces

- Less than half of American children have a playground within walking distance of their home.⁴
- More than 60 percent of Americans say that simple lack of access to a playground is the largest barrier to their children playing on one.⁵
- Half of Americans say their nearest playground is not in good condition.⁶

Health Consequences of Less Physical Activity

- Only about half of children age 12 to 21 engage in regular, vigorous physical activity.⁷
- The percentage of school-age children that are overweight more than doubled between 1970 and 2000.⁸
- Childhood obesity increases the risk of developing diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Unless current exercise habits change, one-third of the children born in the U.S. in 2000 will become diabetic.⁹
- Childhood obesity increases health care costs. Hospitalizations among children and adolescents for diseases associated with obesity increased dramatically between 1979 and 1999. Hospital costs more than tripled, from \$35 million to \$127 million.¹⁰

1 "How Bike Paths and Bike Lanes Make a Difference," Bureau of Transportation Statistics, http://www.bts.gov/publications/issue_briefs/number_11/html/entire.html.

2 "Sidewalks Promote Walking," Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2004, http://www.bts.gov/publications/issue_briefs/number_12/.

3 "Public Health and the Built Environment," American Institute of Architects, http://www.aia.org/liv_TP_health.

4 "KaBOOM! and The Home Depot Commission First Gallup Survey on Playground Use in the United States," KaBOOM!, 2003, http://www.kaboom.org/News/Press_Room/Gallup2002.html.

5 "KaBOOM! and The Home Depot Commission First Gallup Survey on Playground Use in the United States," KaBOOM!, 2003, http://www.kaboom.org/News/Press_Room/Gallup2002.html.

6 "KaBOOM! and The Home Depot Commission First Gallup Survey on Playground Use in the United States," KaBOOM!, 2003, http://www.kaboom.org/News/Press_Room/Gallup2002.html.

7 "Public Health and the Built Environment," American Institute of Architects, http://www.aia.org/liv_TP_health.

8 "Childhood Obesity," The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools, <http://www.healthinschools.org/sh/obesityfs.asp>.

9 "Public Health and the Built Environment," American Institute of Architects, http://www.aia.org/liv_TP_health.

10 "Childhood Obesity," The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools, <http://www.healthinschools.org/sh/obesityfs.asp>.



National Fact Sheet:

Surrounding Our Kids with Safety

Children count on adults to keep them safe from harm. Unfortunately, our built environment often harms our children more than it helps them. Children are at risk when walking or biking on unsafe roads and are exposed to a wide range of toxins at schools and at home. Designing communities that keep our children safe is vital to improving their long-term health.

Pedestrian Safety

- Pedestrian injury is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 8-14.¹
- Child pedestrian injuries are more likely to occur in areas with high traffic volume, higher posted speed limits, no divided highways, and few alternative play areas.²
- Traffic danger prevents 40 percent of children from walking or biking to school.³ Nearly 60 percent of parents and children who do walk to school encounter at least one serious hazard, such as lack of sidewalks or crosswalks and wide roads.⁴
- Traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps can reduce the risk of injury or death among children struck by a car in their neighborhood by 50 percent or more.⁵

Lead

- While lead levels in children's blood have been decreasing, nearly half a million children have blood lead levels higher than the maximum safe standard⁶ and an estimated 24 million homes have lead-based paint hazards.⁷
- Lead disproportionately impacts underserved communities. In inner cities, one in every four to six children may have elevated lead levels⁸ and children from poor families are eight times more likely to be poisoned by lead than those from higher income families.⁹

Mold

- Mold is present in many environments, but it is more likely to become a problem in substandard, poorly maintained homes and schools.
- Hundreds of schools across the country have been closed temporarily because of mold.¹⁰
- Exposure to mold and dampness in the home doubles the risk of asthma development in children.¹¹

1 "Facts About Injuries to Child Pedestrians," Safe Kids WorldWide, http://www.usa.safekids.org/content_documents/Ped_facts.pdf.

2 "Facts About Injuries to Child Pedestrians," Safe Kids WorldWide, http://www.usa.safekids.org/content_documents/Ped_facts.pdf.

3 "Safety Facts," Safe Community Coalition, <http://www.safecommunitycoalition.org/Pedestrians%20Fact%20Sheets%20-%20Dane%20City.pdf>.

4 "Facts About Injuries to Child Pedestrians," Safe Kids WorldWide, http://www.usa.safekids.org/content_documents/Ped_facts.pdf.

5 "Facts About Injuries to Child Pedestrians," Safe Kids WorldWide, http://www.usa.safekids.org/content_documents/Ped_facts.pdf.

6 "Children's Blood Lead Levels in the United States," Centers for Disease Control, <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/research/kids8LL.htm>.

7 "Home-Based Child Care Lead Safety Program," National Center for Health Housing, <http://www.centerforhealthyhousing.org/html/leap.html>.

8 "The Built Environment and Health: 11 Profiles of Neighborhood Transformation," Prevention Institute, <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/builtenv.html>.

9 "Lead," Community Environmental Health Resource Center, 2004, <http://www.cehrc.org/tools/lead/index.cfm>.

10 "How Healthy Is Your School?" National Safety Council, <http://www.nsc.org/home/articles/01fal20.htm>.

11 "Study: Mold in Homes Doubles Risk of Asthma," Environmental Health Perspectives, 2005, <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/press/030105c.html>.



National Fact Sheet:

Surrounding Our Kids with Clean Air

The built environment affects every aspect of children's lives, including the air they breathe. Increased use of cars leads to elevated levels of air pollution in many communities. Exposure to secondhand smoke and other airborne toxins causes respiratory illness in kids. Designing communities that help our kids breathe easier is vital to improving their long-term health.

Transportation and Air Pollution

- When more people use cars to get around, motor vehicle emissions increase, which impacts air quality. In 2003, more than 60 percent of children under the age of 17 lived in counties that didn't meet national air quality standards.¹
- Increasing the use of public transportation can dramatically improve air quality. Compared with private cars, public transportation produces 95 percent less carbon monoxide, 92 percent fewer volatile organic compounds, and 45 percent less carbon dioxide per passenger mile.²
- During the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, the city's plan to reduce automobile congestion through widespread use of public transportation resulted in a 22 percent decline in traffic counts, a 28 percent decline in daily ozone concentrations, and a 41 percent decrease in asthma acute-care events.³

Secondhand Smoke

- Children exposed to tobacco smoke in their environment have a 50 to 100 percent greater risk of developing acute respiratory illness.⁴
- Secondhand smoke is responsible for as many as 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections in babies younger than 18 months old each year.⁵
- Nearly three out of every five children between the ages of 4 and 11 are exposed to second-hand smoke.⁶

Airborne Toxins and Asthma

- Nearly one in every 10 kids has asthma,⁷ the most common chronic childhood disease.⁸
- Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism among children due to chronic illness, and results in more than 14 million missed school days each year.⁹
- The number of children with asthma has doubled since 1980¹⁰ and the number of children dying from asthma has tripled.¹¹

1 "America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2005," Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2005, <http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/index.asp>.

2 "Responding to Critics Toolkit," Center for Transportation Excellence, <http://www.ctfe.org/critics/tte.asp>.

3 "The Built Environment and Children's Health," Susan Kay Commins and Richard Joseph Jackson, Centers for Disease Control.

4 "The Dirty Dozen: Twelve Myths that Undermine Tobacco Control," Thomas R. Frieden and Drew E. Blakeman, *American Journal of Public Health*, September 2005.

5 "Indoor Air Quality Reference Guide," Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/tfs/guidef.html.

6 "America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2005," Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2005, <http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/index.asp>.

7 "America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2005," Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2005, <http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/index.asp>.

8 "The Built Environment and Children's Health," Susan Kay Commins and Richard Joseph Jackson, Centers for Disease Control.

9 "Indoor Air Quality Reference Guide," Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/tfs/guidef.html.

10 "America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2005," Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2005, <http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/index.asp>.

11 "Asthma's Impact on Children and Adolescents," Centers for Disease Control, <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/children.htm>.



Customizable Fact Sheet:

Five Problems and Five Solutions

[INSERT COMMUNITY] has a strong tradition of engineering feats that contribute to our sense of local pride such as [INSERT EXAMPLES OF LOCAL ENGINEERING ACHIEVEMENTS]. Yet, our modern built environment - our buildings, roads, sidewalks and neighborhood design - adversely affects the health and safety of our children. The good news is that we created these built environments and we are equally empowered to create healthier ones. Balanced solutions exist that will help us improve the health of [INSERT COMMUNITY] and [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s kids.

- 1. Problem:** Lack of sidewalks, safe play spaces, and access to fresh foods contribute to increases in childhood obesity and related diseases like diabetes. In [INSERT COMMUNITY/STATE], more than [X NUMBER] of children are now overweight and only about [X PERCENT] of our kids engage in regular physical activity.

Solution: [INSERT LOCAL COMMUNITY ASK HERE.] Increase the number of sidewalks, bike paths and safe places to play in [INSERT COMMUNITY] by 25 percent. Provide incentives to businesses so that every neighborhood in [INSERT COMMUNITY] is served by full-service supermarkets with a wide selection of fresh and healthy foods.
- 2. Problem:** Poor indoor and outdoor air quality leads to asthma, now the most common chronic childhood disease in [INSERT COMMUNITY].

Solution: [INSERT LOCAL COMMUNITY ASK HERE.] Encourage use of [INSERT NAME OF LOCAL TRANSIT SYSTEM] to decrease motor vehicle emissions. Improve substandard housing in [INSERT NEIGHBORHOOD] so children are not exposed to indoor allergens that cause asthma. Site new neighborhoods in [INSERT COMMUNITY] where air is cleaner, away from highways and industry.
- 3. Problem:** At home, at school and outdoors in [INSERT COMMUNITY], children are exposed to toxins that can cause serious diseases. For instance, [X NUMBER] of homes in [INSERT COMMUNITY/STATE] are estimated to have lead-based paint hazards, which can have a debilitating effect on children's development.

Solution: [INSERT LOCAL COMMUNITY ASK HERE.] Launch an effort to clean up toxic homes and schools in [INSERT COMMUNITY] to eliminate lead, mold and other toxins that poison kids. Pass smoke-free ordinances so [INSERT COMMUNITY] children are not exposed to second-hand smoke.
- 4. Problem:** Children living in [INSERT NAMES OF NEIGHBORHOODS] neighborhoods in our community do not have a nearby doctor or pharmacy to provide them with the care they need. [INSERT SPECIFIC STATISTIC ABOUT LACK OF NEIGHBORHOOD PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS IF AVAILABLE.]

Solution: [INSERT LOCAL COMMUNITY ASK HERE.] Provide incentives to bring or keep primary care providers in all neighborhoods in [INSERT COMMUNITY].
- 5. Problem:** The lack of safe places to walk, bike and play leads to preventable injuries in children. In [INSERT COMMUNITY], [X NUMBER] of child pedestrians were hurt or killed by cars last year.

Solution: [INSERT LOCAL COMMUNITY ASK HERE.] Build sidewalks, bike paths, and safe playgrounds in [INSERT COMMUNITY] so that our children can play with less risk of injury. Work with the local police department to recommit to enforcement of school speed zones.



Customizable Fact Sheet:

Surrounding [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s Kids with Equal Opportunity

The built environment limits the access of children living in low-income areas of [INSERT COMMUNITY] to equal opportunities to grow up healthy. Designing [INSERT COMMUNITY] so that all children have access to fresh food, primary health care, and safe housing is vital to improving our children's long-term health.

Fresh Food

- Nationwide, there are fewer supermarkets located in low-income communities than in middle class neighborhoods or more affluent areas. In [INSERT COMMUNITY], there are [X PERCENT OR X FRACTION] fewer supermarkets in low-income areas than in higher-income areas.
- Low-income communities are more likely to be served by small convenience stores, liquor stores and fast food restaurants where the selection and quality of fresh foods are poor. Here in [INSERT COMMUNITY], the average large supermarket offers [XX] fresh food selections, while the average small store offers only [XX].

Primary Health Care

- Kids in [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s low-income neighborhoods have [X TIMES] fewer primary care providers and [X TIMES] fewer pharmacies near their homes than kids who live in more affluent neighborhoods.
- The result is that kids in [INSERT NEIGHBORHOOD] don't get the health care they need. Consequently, [INSERT STATISTIC ABOUT LOCAL DISPARITY, SUCH AS KIDS IN THESE NEIGHBORHOODS NOT RECEIVING IMMUNIZATIONS AT THE SAME RATE AS KIDS IN AFFLUENT NEIGHBORHOODS.]

Healthy Housing

- In [INSERT COMMUNITY], more than [XX] households with children live in substandard housing.
- These children are more likely to be exposed to structural hazards in the home and more likely to have diseases such as lead poisoning and asthma as a result.¹

Making a Difference for our Kids

We have the power to make changes in [INSERT COMMUNITY] so that our children all have an equal opportunity to grow up healthy.

- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s parents can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR PARENTS].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s leaders can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR LEADERS].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s businesses can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR BUSINESSES LIKE PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS AND/OR SUPERMARKETS].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s housing authority can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR HOUSING AUTHORITY].

¹ "The Built Environment and Children's Health," Susan Kay Commins and Richard Joseph Jackson, Centers for Disease Control.



Customizable Fact Sheet:

Surrounding [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s Kids with the Opportunity for Physical Activity

Opportunities for children to experience physical activity in a safe and healthy way have largely been engineered out of [INSERT COMMUNITY]. Multi-lane roads have divided neighborhoods and play spaces are far away or unsafe. The result is that our children's obesity and disease rates are rising. Designing [INSERT COMMUNITY] so that children have ample opportunity for physical activity is vital to improving our kids' long-term health.

Sidewalks and Bike Paths

- [X PERCENT] of [INSERT COMMUNITY] residents report sidewalks are not available or are in poor condition in their neighborhoods.
- Children's opportunities to walk to school or ride a bike safely are limited when communities forsake sidewalks and bike paths for high-speed roads.
- Only [X PERCENT OR X FRACTION] of [INSERT COMMUNITY] children walk or bike to school.
- [X PERCENT] of [INSERT COMMUNITY] residents live in areas where there are no bike paths or lanes.

Play Spaces

- Less than [X PERCENT OR X FRACTION] of [INSERT COMMUNITY] children have a playground within walking distance of their home.
- [X PERCENT OR X FRACTION] of [INSERT COMMUNITY] playgrounds contain at least one safety hazard or maintenance problem.

Health Consequences of Less Physical Activity

- Only about [X PERCENT] of children in [INSERT COMMUNITY] engage in regular, vigorous physical activity.
- The number of school-age children in [INSERT COMMUNITY] that are overweight has increased more than [X PERCENT] in the last [X YEARS].
- Childhood obesity increases the risk of developing diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Unless current exercise habits change, [X PERCENT] of the children born in [INSERT COMMUNITY] will become diabetic.

Making a Difference for our Kids

We have the power to make changes in [INSERT COMMUNITY] so that our children all have the opportunity to get ample physical activity.

- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s parents can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR PARENTS].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s leaders can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR LEADERS].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s roadway planners can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR ROADWAY PLANNERS].



Customizable Fact Sheet:

Surrounding [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s Kids with Safety

[INSERT COMMUNITY]'s children count on adults to keep them safe from harm. Unfortunately, our built environment often harms our children more than it helps them. In [INSERT COMMUNITY], children are at risk when walking or biking on unsafe roads and are exposed to a wide range of toxins at schools and at home. Designing [INSERT COMMUNITY] to keep our children safe is vital to improving their long-term health.

Pedestrian Safety

- In [INSERT COMMUNITY], [X NUMBER] of child pedestrians were hurt or killed by cars last year.
- Children living near [INSERT ROAD NAMES] are most at risk.
- Nearly [X PERCENT] of parents and children who do walk to school in [INSERT COMMUNITY] encounter at least one serious hazard, such as lack of sidewalks or crosswalks and wide roads.
- In [INSERT NEIGHBORHOOD], the risk of a child being hit by a car decreased by [X PERCENT] after speed bumps were installed.

Lead

- While lead levels in children's blood have been decreasing, nearly [X NUMBER] children in [INSERT COMMUNITY] have blood lead levels higher than the maximum safe standard.
- [X NUMBER] of homes in [INSERT COMMUNITY/STATE] are estimated to have lead-based paint hazards, which can have a debilitating effect on children's development.

Mold

- Mold is present in many environments, but it is more likely to become a problem in substandard, poorly maintained homes and schools.
- [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] was closed last year because of mold.
- Exposure to mold and dampness in the home doubles the risk of asthma development in children.¹ In [INSERT COMMUNITY], [X NUMBER] of children live with asthma.

Making a Difference for our Kids

We have the power to make changes in [INSERT COMMUNITY] so that our children can live, go to school and play where it is safe.

- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s parents can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR PARENTS].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s leaders can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR LEADERS].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s school board can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR SCHOOL BOARD].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s housing authority can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR HOUSING AUTHORITY].

¹ "Study: Mold in Homes Doubles Risk of Asthma," Environmental Health Perspectives, 2005, <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/press/030105c.html>.



Customizable Fact Sheet:

Surrounding [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s Kids with Clean Air

The built environment in [INSERT COMMUNITY] affects every aspect of our children's lives, including the air they breathe. Increased use of cars leads to elevated levels of air pollution in [INSERT COMMUNITY]. Exposure to secondhand smoke and other airborne toxins causes respiratory illness in kids. Designing [INSERT COMMUNITY] so that we help our kids breathe easier is vital to improving their long-term health.

Transportation and Air Pollution

- When more people use cars to get around, motor vehicle emissions increase, which impacts air quality. [INSERT COMMUNITY] fails to meet [X number] of federal air quality standards.
- Increasing the use of public transportation can dramatically improve air quality. Compared with private cars, public transportation produces 95 percent less carbon monoxide, 92 percent fewer volatile organic compounds, and 45 percent less carbon dioxide per passenger mile.¹

Secondhand Smoke

- Children exposed to tobacco smoke in their environment have a 50 to 100 percent greater risk of developing acute respiratory illness.²
- In [INSERT COMMUNITY], [X PERCENT] of children are exposed to secondhand smoke.
- Secondhand smoke is responsible for as many as [X NUMBER] lower respiratory tract infections in babies younger than 18 months old in [INSERT COMMUNITY] each year.

Airborne Toxins and Asthma

- [X NUMBER] of children in [INSERT COMMUNITY] have been diagnosed with asthma.
- Nationwide, asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism among children due to chronic illness.³ In [INSERT COMMUNITY], our children missed more than [X NUMBER] days of school last year due to asthma.

Making a Difference for our Kids

We have the power to make changes in [INSERT COMMUNITY] so that our children can breathe easier.

- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s parents can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR PARENTS].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s leaders can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR LEADERS].
- [INSERT COMMUNITY]'s transportation authority can [INSERT LOCAL ASK FOR TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY].

1 "Responding to Critics Toolkit," Center for Transportation Excellence, <http://www.cte.org/critics/te.asp>.

2 "The Dirty Dozen: Twelve Myths that Undermine Tobacco Control," Thomas R. Frieden and Drew E. Blakeman, *American Journal of Public Health*, September 2005.

3 "Indoor Air Quality Reference Guide," Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/tfs/guidef.html.



RESOURCES:

Government:

Government

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: www.ahrq.gov

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

Children's Health and the Built Environment: www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/children.htm

Department of Agriculture: www.usda.org

Department of Health and Human Services: www.dhhs.gov

Department of Housing and Urban Development: www.hud.gov

Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov

Food and Drug Administration: www.fda.gov

Health Resources and Services Organization: www.hrsa.gov

Healthy Schools: <http://www.epa.gov/schools/>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences: www.niehs.nih.gov

National Park Service: www.nps.gov

Office of the Surgeon General: www.surgeongeneral.gov/sgoffice.htm

President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports: www.fitness.gov

Smart Growth: <http://www.epa.gov/dced/>

Smoke Free Homes: <http://www.epa.gov/smokefree/>

Organizations

Active Living by Design: www.activelivingbydesign.org

Alliance for Healthy Homes: www.afhh.org

America Walks: www.americawalks.org

American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org

American Legacy Foundation: www.americanlegacy.org/americanlegacy/skins/alf/home.aspx

American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation: www.no-smoke.org

American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org/healthtopics/commhlth.cfm

Children's Environmental Health Network: www.cehn.org

Childproofing our Communities Campaign: www.chej.org

Center for Children's Health and the Environment: www.childenvironment.org/

Center for Clean Air Policy: www.ccap.org

Coalition for America's Children: Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment: www.health-e-kids.org

Community Toolbox for Children's Environmental Health: <http://www.communitytoolbox.org>

Environmental Health Coalition: www.environmentalhealth.org

Healthy Schools Network, Inc.: www.healthyschools.org

Institute for Children's Environmental Health: <http://www.iceh.org/>

Keep Schools Safe: www.keepschoolssafe.org

National Center for Bicycling and Walking: www.bikewalk.org

National Environmental Education Training Foundation: www.neetf.org

National Health Museum: www.nationalhealthmuseum.org

National Organizations for Youth Safety: www.noys.org

National Center for Healthy Housing: www.centerforhealthyhousing.org

National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity: www.ncppa.org

National Program for Playground Safety: <http://www.playgroundsafety.org/home.htm>

Partners for Children's Health and the Environment: <http://www.partnersforchildren.org/>



Rails-to-Trails Conservancy: www.railtrails.org
Safe Kids Worldwide: www.safekids.org
Safe-Routes to School: www.saferoutestoschool.org/
Shape Up America: www.shapeup.org
Smart Growth America: www.smartgrowthamerica.com/
Smart Growth Online: www.smartgrowth.org
Society for Nutrition Education: www.sne.org
Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation: www.thesociety.org
Society for Public Health Education: www.sophe.org
Taking on Asthma: www.takingonasthma.org
The Prevention Institute: www.preventioninstitute.org/builtenv.html
The Urban Institute: <http://www.urban.org/>
YMCA of the USA: www.ymca.net

Associations

American Dietetic Association: www.eatright.org
American Obesity Association: www.obesity.org
American Planning Association: <http://www.planning.org/yourcommunity/overview.htm>
American Public Transportation Association: www.apta.com
American School Health Association: www.ashaweb.org
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs: <http://www.amchp.org/>
Association of Occupation and Environmental Health Clinics: www.aoec.org/
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials:
http://www.astho.org/?template=healthy_places.html
National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions:
www.childrenshospitals.net/
National Association of Counties: www.naco.org
National Association of County and City Health Officials:
http://www.naccho.org/topics/hpdp/Land_Use_Planning.cfm
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners: www.napnap.org
National Association of Social Workers: www.nasw.org
National Association of Sport and Physical Educators: www.ncppa.org
National Association of State Boards of Education: www.nasbe.org
National Education Association: www.nea.org
National Parent Teacher Association: www.pta.org
United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association: www.uffva.org

Kids Corner

American Planning Association: <http://www.planning.org/kidsandcommunity/>
Centers of Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.bam.gov/>
Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/kids/>
<http://www.epa.gov/students/>
<http://www.epa.gov/highschool/>
Healthy Schools Network, Inc: <http://www.healthyschools.org/kids.html>
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/kids/>
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/>



National Library of Medicine: <http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/>
Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: <http://www.healthfinder.gov/kids/>
Safe Routes to School:
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/routes2school/documents/WalkingSchoolBus.doc>
The President's Council on Physical Fitness: http://www.fitness.gov/home_pres_chall.htm
United States Department of Agriculture: <http://www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/>
United States Food and Drug Administration: <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/kids/default.htm>
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development:
<http://www.hud.gov/kids/index.html>
United States Department of Transportation:
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/education/bcktosch/school99.htm>
Washington State Department of Ecology:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/kids/Kids_Page.htm

Tools for Teachers

Association for Curriculum Development and Supervision Education Topics:
<http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/menuitem.7f9daa18c79c56dddeb3ffdb62108a0c/>
Earth Force: <http://www.earthforce.org/section/resources>
Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/teachers/curric-index.htm>
Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity:
<http://www.panaonline.org/programs/khz/actionkits/>
Safe Routes to School: <http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/lessonplans.html>
United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/ce/content/for_teachers/index.cfm
United States Geological Survey: <http://education.usgs.gov/>

Other Tools:

American Nonsmokers Rights Foundation Model Smoke-free Ordinance: <http://www.no-smoke.org/document.php?id=229>
Bikeability Checklist: <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/cps/checklist.htm>
KidsHealth BMI Calculator: www.kidshealth.org/parent/food/weight/bmi_charts.html
Organize a Walking School Bus: <http://www.walkingbus.org/howcan.html>
Organize a Walk-To-School event: <http://www.walktoschool-usa.org/7steps.htm>
Walkability Checklist: <http://www.walkinginfo.org/walkingchecklist.htm>