

CREATING HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS: Secondhand Smoke

Parents and caregivers play an important role in helping to ensure that their young children have a healthy environment at home, at day care, and at school. It is important to make sure that your young children are not exposed to adults smoking around them for the following reasons*:

- Tobacco smoke releases 200 known poisons into the air and everyone that is around a smoker is inhaling these poisons.
- Infants in the first two years of life are particularly affected by smoke, as they have a much higher rate of lung diseases such as bronchitis and pneumonia when exposed to secondhand smoke.
- Young children who are surrounded by secondhand smoke are twice as likely to have acute respiratory illnesses as those in a non-smoking environment.
- Secondhand smoke makes symptoms worse in children with asthma, and can trigger asthma attacks.

**Adapted from the American Lung Association*

Listed below are some simple things you can do to protect your children:

- If you are a smoker, smoke outside and away from your children. Of course, the best thing you can do for your children is to quit smoking. Talk to your doctor for resources to help you quit.
- Let family and friends know that smoking is not allowed in your home or car, or anywhere around your children. Put up no smoking signs and stickers if necessary to help get the message across.
- Support legislation to restrict smoking in public places and at the workplace.

Your children have the right to breathe clean air free from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke. As a parent, you can help them protect that right.