

February 2024



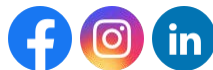
Hello IKE Supporter,

Welcome to the February edition of the Improving Kids' Environment (IKE) newsletter. IKE recently launched its own social media accounts as a platform for information on children's environmental health in Indiana. We hope you will follow them and find them useful.

This month we have a summary of some of the environmental health related bills at the Indiana Statehouse along with information on integrated pest management and more.

Thank you for all you do to help Hoosier children!

Follow our new IKE social media accounts!



EPA Takes Action to Improve Air Quality



On February 7, the [EPA finalized a rule](#) updating and strengthening the standard for fine particulate matter in the air. Fine particulate matter, abbreviated PM2.5, is defined as microscopic particles and liquid droplets that are 2.5 micrometers in diameter or smaller, about one-30th of the width of a hair. Much of PM2.5 gets into the air from burning gas, diesel, coal, or other fuels. It is small enough to be inhaled deep into the lungs and even get into the bloodstream where it can worsen heart and lung conditions.

The new standard moves the maximum concentration of PM2.5 from 12 micrograms per

cubic meter of air down to 9. The EPA will also revise the national [Air Quality Index](#) to reflect this change. A number of Indiana's larger metropolitan areas have had annual averages [exceeding 9 micrograms per cubic meter](#) in recent years and may need to take steps to improve their air quality.

House and Senate Bills

The Indiana legislative session got underway in early January. A couple of bills related to children's environmental health are under consideration:

- [SB 5](#) would assist utilities replacing lead service lines for abandoned buildings, and it would create a fund to help schools and childcares test for lead in drinking water
- [HB 1399](#) would limit which perfluorinated chemicals (PFAS) could be regulated in Indiana

The following bills related to children's environmental health were introduced, but have already died:

- [SB 277](#) would allow renters to escrow their rent until repairs are made
- [SB 162](#) would give a town, city or county the right to establish a local air pollution control agency.
- [HB 1252](#) would require that school buildings be tested for radon

For more on the environmental bills at the Indiana Statehouse, visit [HEC's Bill Watch](#) page, social media, or subscribe to the [HEC newsletter](#).

Asthma & Air Quality

Exposure Reduction Strategy: Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

We've been experiencing abnormally warmer days during colder months. To help reduce your exposure to allergens and to keep your home free of pests consider Integrated Pest Management.

Integrated Pest Management or IPM is a strategy that combines various strategies to manage pests while minimizing use of pesticides. IPM uses strategies related to the knowledge of the pest's life cycle and how the pest operates in an environment. If pests can't get the food, water, or living space they need, they won't stay. This combination reduces pests and reduces the number of hazards that people, pets, and the environment are exposed to.

Here is the workflow from the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs. For each of these steps ask the following questions of yourself before encountering a pest.

- Set Action Threshold
 - What environmental conditions are needed for me to implement an IPM strategy?

4 INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT TIPS

4 Tips to Help You Maintain a Healthy Space. Created by Improving Kids Environment with information sourced from the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs.

Step 01
Set Action Threshold

- What environmental conditions are needed for me to implement an IPM strategy?

Step 02
Identify & Monitor

- What is the species of pest that is in my home?
- What does this pest need to survive?
- How does the pest communicate with the other pests?
- i.e. Consider how ants leave a scent trail for other ants to the food or water source.

Step 03

- Identify & Monitor
 - What is the species of pest that is in my home?
 - What does this pest need to survive?
 - How does the pest communicate with the other pests?
 - i.e. Consider how ants leave a scent trail for other ants to the food or water source.
- Prevent
 - How am I managing my outdoor space?
 - i.e. Keeping leaves and other debris off the front porch, cleaning the windows door frames, and gutters.
 - How am I managing my indoor space?
 - i.e. taking out trash regularly, sealing food properly, cleaning out the windows.
- Control
 - What are the least harmful chemicals that I can use in my space?
 - Thoroughly read the directions before use. Some brands direct you to how to use the product, and who should and should not be present when the product is in use.



Sources include [EPA Office of Pesticide Programs](#) & [Purdue Extension](#).

Lead

Lead's impact on literacy in Hoosier Children

On January 11th, the Indianapolis Recorder published an article on [how lead has impacted literacy rates](#) in Indianapolis school children. The article highlights a report by Paramount which examined the relationship between student health and academic achievement over a 3-year period. According to Paramount Health Data Project's research, there is a direct relationship between lead levels in Indianapolis schools and the literacy achievement in those buildings.

To determine this, the report looked at literacy rates in buildings with various levels of lead present in the building. The results showed that buildings in violation of EPA lead standards showed lower academic achievement compared to buildings not in violation. [The report suggests](#) that schools should work with students who are impacted by lead to get them back on track for academic achievement. In addition, it is strongly recommended that schools address the presence of lead in their buildings to increase academic achievement.

Sources: [Indianapolis Recorder](#), [Paramount Health Data Reporter](#)





Healthy Spaces Happy Children Recruitment

Childcare Providers in Central Indiana - Wanted!

Would you like to receive free supplies for your childcare center?

The Healthy Spaces Happy Children is seeking childcare providers to join the program, which provides free supplies and promotion for Indiana childcare centers with asthma-friendly, environmentally healthy spaces for the children in their care. When a childcare center signs up, we provide free technical assistance, supplies, and resources to help achieve the center's healthy space goals. Once the goals are reached, the center earns additional supplies along with promotion as a Healthy Space.

If you are a licensed childcare provider in Marion or Johnson county, apply to join the pilot today.

[Apply Today](#)





News, Events, and Resources

- **February 15th, 2024, 12 pm ET** - [Health Is a Human Right](#) – [Black Appalachian Coalition \(BLAC\)](#)
- **February 21st, 2024** - [Asthma Basics Workshop](#) – Virtually
- **February 22nd, 2024** - [Public meeting](#) at Calumet College of St. Joseph about the air permit renewal for BP Whiting
- **February 26th, 2024** - Winter [Virtual Conference on Lead, Healthy Housing & Home Safety](#)
- **March 9th, 2024** - [Fight for Air Climb](#) - In-person
- **March 21st, 2024, 12 pm ET** – [Air Pollution: Sources, Health Harms and Mitigation](#) - [Black Appalachian Coalition \(BLAC\)](#)

[See more Indiana Environmental Events at HEC's Event Calendar](#)

The Hoosier Environmental Council also offers a newsletter that discusses a broad range of environmental issues specific to Indiana. To sign-up, click [here](#).



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