

An Important Message About Lead Poisoning From Your Child's School

Why is New Jersey concerned about lead poisoning?

New Jersey has some of the oldest homes in the United States. One in three homes was built before 1978. Lead-based paint was banned in 1978. Old homes means old paint. Old paint that is chipping and peeling is a source of lead exposure. Also, dust created when renovating or remodeling.



Why is your child's school concerned about lead poisoning?

Although children 6 to 29 months old are at highest risk for lead poisoning, the effects may not appear until children start school.

The effects may include:

- hyperactivity
- aggression
- attention deficits
- lowered intelligence
- decreased hand-eye coordination
- longer reaction times
- speech and hearing problems, and
- difficulty acquiring language skills.

Some lead poisoned children may need in-classroom supports (for example, classroom seating away from distractions) or special education services.

Why should parents be concerned about lead poisoning?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines lead poisoning as a blood lead level of 10 ug/dL (micrograms per deciliter) or more. However, research has shown that even at lower blood lead levels, lead can affect your child's ability to learn.



What can school personnel and parents do?

L:

- **Learn** more about lead poisoning.
 - Know that very young children are growing quickly and lead affects their developing brains.
 - Lead poisoning's effects are permanent and may not show up until children are school-aged.

E:

- **Establish** communication between teachers and parents to assure that children affected by lead receive in-classroom supports and, if needed, special education services.
- **Educate** all children to always wash their hands before eating and after playing outside to reduce exposure to lead dust that can be found in older homes and schools.
- **Ensure** that all contractors and school maintenance workers use lead-safe work practices when renovating or remodeling homes and schools.

A:

- **Advocate** for children affected by lead by arranging diagnostic evaluations by private practitioners (for example, pediatric neurologist) or through the school-based Child Study Team at critical points in affected children's development.
 - First Grade: Children begin to learn basic skills such as reading words and performing math.
 - Fourth Grade: Classroom emphasis shifts from learning basic skills to learning new material.
 - Seventh Grade: Students are expected to use higher-order planning and organizational skills to complete long-term projects.
- **Assessment** should be done by the preschool and elementary grades' school nurses on all incoming children's medical records to identify previous lead test results or for a history of lead poisoning.
- **Assure** that children are tested at the correct ages. A blood lead test is the only way to know a child has lead poisoning.
 - New Jersey law requires that all children be tested at ages 1 and 2 years.
 - Children 3 to 6 years should be tested if they have never had a blood lead test.
 - Parents should take their children to their healthcare provider to get a blood lead test.
 - Free or low-cost testing is available from local health departments or Federally Qualified Health Centers for children with no insurance or whose insurance does not cover blood lead testing.

D:

- **Determine** if children are offered healthy foods with calcium and iron at meals and snack times. These foods help the body get rid of lead. These foods include low-fat milk and yogurt, lean meats, beans, and fortified juices and cereals.
- **Developmental** assessments should be ongoing for lead poisoned children.

To learn more about childhood lead poisoning prevention contact:

**New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
call: 609-292-5666**

or visit these websites

www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/newborn/lead.shtml
www.leadsafenj.org