

## Healthy Homes/Healthy Kids Introduction to the Series

### How Can We Make Our Homes Healthier?

#### Background information for trainers

This lesson is intended to be the first lesson in a series on healthy homes.

#### How is housing related to health?

According to the U.S. Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes (2009),

In the United States today the leading preventable causes of death, disease, and disability are asthma, lead poisoning, deaths in house fires, falls on stairs and from windows, burns and scald injuries, and drowning in bathtubs and pools.

As you can see, these and other health issues are related to housing.

- Asthma attacks may be caused by mold, dust mites, and other substances in the home
- Lead poisoning may be caused by deteriorating paint or unsafe renovations of older homes
- Fires and lung cancer may be caused by smoking in the home
- Falls may be caused by unlocked windows or by clutter
- Injuries may be caused by improperly stored guns
- Poisoning may be caused by improperly stored cleaning supplies, pesticides, and other chemicals

#### What is a healthy home?

A healthy home is one that is **planned, built, renovated, and maintained** in ways that support the health of residents—children and adults.

Here are the features of a healthy home, according to the National Center for Healthy Housing:

- **Dry**  
Dry homes are less likely to have mold and mildew, which can irritate the nose and throat, cause coughing and congestion, and set off asthma attacks in some people. Dry homes are also less likely to have pests like rats and roaches.
- **Clean**  
Clean homes have fewer pests (like bugs and mice), which can trigger asthma attacks, and fewer contaminants, such as dangerous chemicals like lead.
- **Free of pests**  
Pests like mice, rats, and roaches can carry disease and trigger asthma attacks. In addition, many of the strong pesticides used to kill them are dangerous, especially for young children.
- **Well-ventilated**  
Well-ventilated homes have healthier, cleaner air, and people generally have fewer breathing problems.
- **Free of dangerous chemicals**  
Many homes contain dangerous chemicals (such as lead and tobacco smoke), unsafe household cleaners, and bug sprays. Avoiding exposure to these contaminants protects children from dangerous effects.
- **Safe**  
Safe homes help children avoid accidents and injuries from falls, burns, and poisoning.

- **Well-maintained**

Well-maintained homes help children avoid dangerous lead, mold and mildew, and accidents.

**What is the goal of this training?**

The goal is to teach residents how they can create and maintain a healthy home to benefit themselves and their children. For example, they can

- Eliminate things that trigger asthma attacks
- Safely manage lead paint
- Prevent smoking in the home
- Install and maintain smoke alarms
- Reduce clutter
- Reduce the use of dangerous chemicals
- Store essential dangerous chemicals and weapons safely

**Resources for trainers**

**For children**

Healthy Environments for Children Initiative, 2012, *Susie and Jerome Learn about a Healthy Home*, published by the Connecticut Department of Public Health

**For adults**

Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, [www.greenandhealthyhomes.org/](http://www.greenandhealthyhomes.org/)

National Center for Healthy Housing, [www.nchh.org](http://www.nchh.org)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthy Homes Initiative, <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/healthyhomes.htm>

----- *A Healthy Home for Everyone: The Guide for Families and Individuals*, [http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/Final\\_Companion\\_Piece.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/Final_Companion_Piece.pdf)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control, <http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/healthyhomes/index.cfm>

University of Wisconsin, Department of Extension, Healthy Homes Partnership, [www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/](http://www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/)

*Help Yourself to a Healthy Home: Protect Your Children's Health*, 2d edition (available in pdf at [www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/educators.html](http://www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/educators.html))

*Contribuya a Tener un Hogar Sano: Proteja la salud de sus hijos* (available in pdf at [www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/bookspanol.html](http://www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/bookspanol.html))

University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and Isles, <http://isles.org/main/services/environment/>

Dust does not discriminate, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3icXoUD3QhA>

No Hace Discrimina, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHLz08qYbKc>

## Lesson Plan: How Can We Make Our Homes Healthier?

### Learning objectives

At the end of this topic, learners will be able to

- Recognize the importance of keeping their homes as healthy as possible
- List at least four features of a healthy home
- Identify features of their own homes that are considered healthy
- Identify features of their own homes that they can make healthier

Materials you'll need for this lesson

- Copies of handouts
- Pens or pencils

For children's activities

- Child's safety scissors or regular scissors for adult
- Colored pencils, pens, crayons, or markers
- Clean old shoebox or other small box
- Paper (such as white paper, brown paper bag, or wrapping paper) to cover the box
- Clean round container (like a large yogurt or cottage cheese container or an oatmeal box)

If this is not the first lesson, start with a review of the previous week's topic. See that topic for review suggestions.

### Introduce the new topic: healthy homes

Note that wherever we talk about parents or guardians, we mean to include all caregivers in this role, such as stepparents, grandparents, foster parents, etc. Please adjust your language to match individual family situations.

As parents or guardians, we all try to provide a home that will help our children stay healthy and safe. Sometimes we wonder whether there are better ways to do so. We ask ourselves whether, by improving our homes in simple ways, we can better protect our children and ourselves from sickness and injury.

Today we're going to talk about certain features that make a home healthier for the entire family. You'll have a chance to begin thinking about your own home and whether there are ways that you can make it healthier.

Introduce the activity.

What do you think makes a home healthy?

What features should a home have to help a child stay healthy?

Use one of the options below. Give the learner either **Handout 1a** or **Handout 1b**.

**Option 1a**

Learner selects from a given list of possible terms that describe a healthy home

- Give the learner **Handout 1a: What is a healthy home?**
- Ask the learner to put a check mark in column 1 to show the words that describe a **healthy home**.
- Then ask the learner to put a check mark in column 2 to show the words that describe **her own home**.
- Then give the learner the **Handout 2: Answer key**.
- Review the reasons why the marked features make a home healthy.
- Ask the learner to compare her list with the answer key.
- Ask the learner to put a check mark to show any areas where she would like to make her home healthier. Discuss why she would like to make those changes. Support her wish to make changes to make her home healthier.
- If you think the learner should focus on additional or different areas, discuss your reasons with her. After your discussion, ask whether the learner would like to change her list in any way. If you are unable to influence the learner, start with features that seem important to her. Later she may be more willing to consider your priorities.

**Option 1b**

Learner creates a list of terms that describe a healthy home

- Give the learner **Handout 1b: What is a healthy home?**
- Ask the learner to list, in column 1, all of the words that come to mind when we talk about a “healthy home.”
- Then ask the learner to put a check mark in column 2 to show the words that describe **her own home**.
- Then give the learner the **Handout 2: Answer key**.
- Review the reasons why the marked features make a home healthy.
- Ask the learner to compare her list with the answer key.
- Ask the learner to put a check mark in column 3 to show any areas where she would like to make her home healthier. Discuss why she would like to make those changes. Support her wish to make changes to make her home healthier.
- If you think the learner should focus on additional or different areas, discuss your reasons with her. After your discussion, ask whether the learner would like to change her list in any way. If you are unable to influence the learner, start with features that seem important to her. Later she may be more willing to consider your priorities.

Summarize the features that make a home healthy. Give the learner **Handout 3: Quick healthy homes checklist**. The features of a healthy home are listed in the first column.

Let’s review the features that make a home healthy.

- **Dry**  
Dry homes are less likely to have mold and mildew, which can irritate the nose and throat, cause coughing and congestion, and set off asthma attacks in some people. Dry homes are also less likely to have pests like rats and roaches.
- **Clean**  
Clean homes have fewer pests (like bugs and mice), which can trigger asthma attacks, and fewer contaminants, such as dangerous chemicals like lead.
- **Free of pests**

Pests like mice, rats, and roaches can carry disease and trigger asthma attacks. In addition, many of the strong pesticides used to kill them are dangerous, especially for young children.

- **Fresh, moving air**  
Homes with fresh, moving air have healthier, cleaner air, and people generally have fewer breathing problems.
- **Free of dangerous chemicals**  
Many homes contain dangerous chemicals (such as tobacco smoke and lead paint), unsafe household cleaners, and bug sprays. Avoiding exposure to these chemicals protects children from dangerous effects.
- **Safe**  
Safe homes help children avoid accidents and injuries from falls, burns, and poisoning.
- **Well-maintained**  
Well-maintained homes help children avoid dangerous lead, mold and mildew, and accidents.

You've probably noticed that many of these features have overlapping benefits.

Ask learners whether they would like to learn how to make their homes healthier for their children and themselves.

In the first activity, you identified areas where you would like to make your home healthier. We have more information about how you can do so. Would you like to learn more about these areas?

Ask learners whether they would like to find out how healthy their homes are. Do not pressure learners to do so if they are reluctant.

The first step in making your home healthier is to see just where the problems are. We have a short checklist that you can use to find some problem areas.

Would you like to complete the checklist?

If they are willing, offer the learner one of the following options.

**Option 2a**      Ask the learner if she would like to conduct a brief healthy homes check by walking through the home during your visit. You may also be willing to arrange another visit to do this task. **Use Handout 3: Quick healthy homes checklist.**

**Option 2b**      Ask the learner if she would like to conduct her own healthy homes check later, by filling out **Handout 3: Quick healthy homes checklist**. Plan a time to meet again to review the completed checklist and plan next steps.

Remind the learner.

Small changes add up. You **can** make your home healthier, often by making small but important changes.

Explain the homework to the learner. Distribute **Handout 4: Benefits of having a healthy home.**

Before my next visit, I'd like to ask you to think about ways that your family would benefit from having the healthiest possible home. Think about the benefits to yourself, your children, and other people, such as other family members and friends.

For example

Benefits for You	Benefits for Your Children	Benefits for Other People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You would feel more comfortable in your own home.</li> <li>• You would feel happier about inviting friends and family to visit your home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your children would miss school less often because of illnesses like asthma.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your friends would feel more comfortable when they visit you.</li> </ul>

As you think about the benefits, write them down on **Handout 4: Benefits of having a healthy home.** You may want to post the paper on the refrigerator or wherever family members can see your list. Encourage them to add to your list.

Circle the benefits that are most important to you and your family.

**Conclusion**

Distribute **Handout 5: Tips for a healthy home,** which summarizes this lesson.

Today we've talked about healthy homes. We described healthy homes as clean, dry, safe, free of pests and dangerous chemicals, with fresh air, and in good repair.

Do you think that you'll make any changes as a result of what we've talked about today?

**Note to trainer: Please write down any changes that the learner plans to make. We would like to track the learner's plans to help measure the effectiveness of this training.**

**Introduce the activities for children.**

Ask the learner to have the children do one or both of the activities included in this topic. Distribute **Handout 6a: What is a healthy home?** and **Handout 6b: Draw a healthy home.** Ask the learner to do these activities with the child.

Then ask the learner to put the drawing activity on the refrigerator, bulletin board, or some other location where every member of the family can see it, to remind them that they can create a healthy home.

**Evaluation**

Please complete the **Home visitor's feedback and follow-up notes** after you have finished the lesson. You may wish to wait until your next visit to answer the follow-up questions about what changes the learner has made and what activities the learner has used with his or her children. Then return the form to the Family Services Coordinator.

**Review**

After you have completed this topic, you may want to review it with the learner during your next home visit. Ask what the learner remembers.

During our last visit, we talked about how we can make our homes healthier. Would you like to tell me what you remember about what we said?

See how much the learner recalls. You might remind the learner of the following information.

The features that make a home healthy are these:

- **Dry**  
Dry homes are less likely to have mold and mildew, which can irritate the nose and throat, cause coughing and congestion, and set off asthma attacks in some people. Dry homes are also less likely to have pests like rats and roaches.
- **Clean**  
Clean homes have fewer pests (like bugs and mice), which can trigger asthma attacks, and fewer contaminants, such as dangerous chemicals like lead.
- **Free of pests**  
Pests like mice, rats, and roaches can carry disease and trigger asthma attacks. In addition, many of the strong pesticides used to kill them are dangerous, especially for young children.
- **Fresh, moving air**  
Homes with fresh, moving air have healthier, cleaner air, and people generally have fewer breathing problems.
- **Free of dangerous chemicals**  
Many homes contain dangerous chemicals (such as tobacco smoke and lead paint), unsafe household cleaners, and bug sprays. Avoiding exposure to these chemicals protects children from dangerous effects.
- **Safe**  
Safe homes help children avoid accidents and injuries from falls, burns, and poisoning.
- **Well-maintained**  
Well-maintained homes help children avoid dangerous lead, mold and mildew, and accidents.

Ask open-ended questions, such as the ones below. Make a note of any progress the learner has made or any questions the learner may have about this topic.

- Have you thought any more about keeping your home healthier?
- Have you taken any actions to make your home healthier?
- Do you have any questions about this topic?
- Have you had an opportunity to do any of the activities with your child? If so, how did those go?

## Handout 1a What is a healthy home?

Below are words that may describe a home.

1. Put a check mark (✓) in column 1 to show all of the words that you think describe a **healthy home**.
2. Then put a check mark in column 2 to show all the words that you think describe **your own home**. Next, look at the Handout 2, the answer key. Read the reasons why these words describe a healthy home.
3. Then put a check mark in column 3 to show areas where you would like to make your home healthier.
4. Finally, if you have more than one area you would like to work on, number each area in order of importance to you in column 4.

For example, if you would like to make your home cleaner and then clear away clutter, put a **1** on the row for “clean” (the most important area) and a **2** on the row for “clutter” (the second most important area).

	1 Put a check mark (✓) here if the words describe a healthy home	2 Put a check mark (✓) here if the words describe your home	3 Put a check mark (✓) here to show areas where you would like to <b>make your home healthier</b>	4 Rank the areas you want to work on (1 is most important)
Bad condition				
Clean				
Cluttered				
Damp				
Dirty				
Dry				
Free of dangerous chemicals				
Fresh air				
Lots of bugs (insects)				
Messy				
Neat				
No mice or rats				
Safe				
Smoke-filled				
Stuffy				
Well maintained				












## Handout 2      What is a healthy home: Answer key

See below for the correct answers.

	Put a check mark (✓) here if the words describe a healthy home	Why
Bad condition		
Clean	✓	Dirty homes may contain dangerous chemicals, like lead dust. Dirty homes are also more likely to have pests (like bugs and mice), which can trigger asthma attacks. Clean homes avoid these problems.
Cluttered		
Damp		
Dirty		
Dry	✓	Dry homes are less likely have mold, mildew, and pests like rats and roaches. All of these things can make children with asthma sick.
Free of dangerous chemicals	✓	Many homes contain dangerous chemicals (such as strong household cleaners, tobacco smoke, and bug sprays). To protect children from poisoning and other dangerous effects, keep them away from these chemicals.
Fresh air	✓	Well-ventilated homes have healthier, cleaner air, and people generally have fewer breathing problems.
Lots of bugs (insects)		
Messy		
Neat	✓	A neat home provides fewer places for pests like roaches and mice to live. It also prevents people from tripping and falling over clutter.
No mice or rats	✓	Pests like mice, rats, and roaches can carry disease and trigger asthma attacks. But many of the strong pesticides used to kill them are also dangerous, especially for young children. There are safer ways to keep your home free of pests.
Safe	✓	Safe homes help children avoid accidents and injuries from falls, burns, and poisoning.
Smoke-filled		
Stuffy		
Well maintained	✓	Well-maintained homes help children avoid dangerous lead, mold and mildew, and accidents.

### Handout 3 Healthy homes checklist

Features	Problems to look for	Check (✓) any problem that applies to your home
Dry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaky plumbing: pipes, faucets</li> <li>• Moisture stains on ceilings or floors</li> <li>• Bubbling paint</li> <li>• Clogged drains in kitchen or bathroom</li> </ul>	
Clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwashed dishes</li> <li>• Trash lying around (not in garbage cans)</li> <li>• Dust</li> <li>• Pet hair</li> <li>• Mold or mildew in bathroom or kitchen</li> <li>• Dirty floors</li> </ul>	
Free of pests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs of pests: waste, nests, chew marks</li> <li>• No lids on garbage cans</li> <li>• Gaps or holes in building</li> <li>• Torn screens</li> </ul>	
Fresh, moving air 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No exhaust fans in kitchen and bathrooms</li> <li>• Unpleasant smells (chemicals, smoke)</li> <li>• Windows that don't open, even in good weather</li> </ul>	
Free of dangerous chemicals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dangerous chemicals, such as pesticides, cleaning chemicals, and medicines, not locked away</li> <li>• Cigarettes or other tobacco products</li> </ul>	

Features	Problems to look for	Check (✓) any problem that applies to your home
<p>Safe</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clutter, especially on stairs or walkways or near stove or heater</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burned out light bulbs</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slip, trip, and fall hazards, such as loose carpet</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrical outlets without child-safe covers</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoke detectors: none or not working</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon monoxide detector: none or not working</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to post poison control phone number (1-800-222-1222)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to post home address in case of 911 (emergency) call</li> </ul>	
<p>Well maintained</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chipping or peeling paint</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paint chips</li> </ul>	

We'll talk about these topics in more detail in later topics.



## Handout 5 Tips for a healthy home

To make your home healthy, keep it

### Clean

to reduce pests, dangerous chemicals, and asthma triggers



- Clean up clutter, where pests and mold can live
- Use a damp mop and damp dust cloth to clean, and vacuum carefully and often
- Wash bedding once a week, using hot water to kill dust mites
- Leave your shoes at the door to keep dirt out of your home

### Dry

to reduce pests and mold



- Regularly check for leaks, inside and outside, and repair them right away
- Clean up water spills right away

### Safe

to reduce accidents and injuries



- Clear away things that might make you slip, trip, or fall
- Use the safest possible household products
- Store household products and medicines where children cannot reach them
- Make sure that you have a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm

### Well ventilated

to provide fresh air



- Open windows whenever possible
- Use fans in bathrooms and kitchens

### Free of pests

to prevent diseases and reduce asthma triggers



- Remove food, water, and places where pests can live
- Store food in strong, covered containers
- Take out trash every day

### Free of dangerous chemicals

to reduce poisonings, injuries, and other harmful effects



- Do not allow smoking in your home
- Read product labels carefully, and follow their safety directions
- If your home was built before 1978, learn about lead paint dangers
- Test for radon, a gas that causes cancer

### In good repair

to keep small problems from becoming big problems



- Inspect your home regularly
- Seal cracks, holes, and other openings in your home

## Handout 6a      Activity for children: What is a healthy home?

Instructions for adults: Below are some words that describe a healthy home, and some words that don't. You can use this activity to teach your child some words that describe a healthy home.

Here are the correct answers.

Healthy: neat, safe, fresh air, no yucky chemicals, no bugs, dry, and clean.

Not Healthy: dirty, smoky, full of elephants, messy, mice running around, cluttered, leaky faucets, dusty, stuffy air.

There are several ways to do this activity: choose the option that works best for you and your child.

### Option 1: Shoebox healthy home

1. Take a clean old shoebox or other small box, and label it with your child's name and the words "Healthy home." Take a large clean yogurt or cottage cheese container or an oatmeal box and label it "Trash."

You and your child can decorate the shoebox. You might cover it with plain white paper, a cut-up brown paper bag, wrapping paper, or a piece of fabric.

Then your child can draw on the shoebox, use child-safe glue to attach decorations (such as pictures cut out from magazines, small drawings, or pieces of ribbon), or otherwise use his or her imagination to make the box personal.

If you wish, your child can also decorate the trash container.

2. Have your child use safety scissors to cut out all the words in the boxes below, or cut out the words for your child.

You can paste the cut-out words on foam core board, card stock, other heavy paper, or wooden blocks.

Or, instead of cutting out the words, you can copy them onto 3 x 5 cards or card stock and have your child draw pictures to illustrate the words.

3. Read each word or set of words aloud to your child. Explain any words that your child does not understand.
4. Next ask your child to put the pictures that describe a healthy home into the shoebox. Then ask your child to put the words that don't describe a healthy home into the container that represents a trash can.

### Option 2: Paper pile sorting healthy home

1. Have your child use safety scissors to cut out all the words in the boxes below, or cut out the words for your child.

2. Read each word or set of words aloud to your child. Explain any words that your child does not understand.
3. Next ask your child to sort the words into two piles—one pile that describes a healthy home and one pile that does not. Then have your children draw a picture of a healthy home.



**Option 3: Beanbag healthy home**





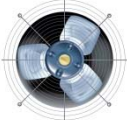










Make this activity into a beanbag toss. Put words or pictures on beanbags and have children toss the beanbags into the healthy home or into the trash container.

**Option 4: Stand up, sit down**

Have your child pick one of the words. You read the word to the child.

If the word describes a healthy home, have the child stand up and do something, like clap his hands, pat her own head, or stand on one foot. If the word doesn't describe a healthy home, have the child sit down.

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Healthy</h2> 	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Not Healthy</h2> 
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<p><b>Dirty</b></p> 	<p><b>Smoky</b></p> 	<p><b>Neat</b></p> 	<p><b>Safe</b></p> 
<p><b>Fresh air</b></p> 	<p><b>Full of elephants</b></p> 	<p><b>No yucky chemicals</b></p> 	<p><b>Messy</b></p> 
<p><b>Mice running around</b></p> 	<p><b>Cluttered</b></p> 	<p><b>Leaky faucets</b></p> 	<p><b>Dusty</b></p> 
<p><b>No bugs</b></p> 	<p><b>Dry</b></p> 	<p><b>Stuffy air</b></p> 	<p><b>Clean</b></p> 



## **Handout 6b      Activity for children: Draw a healthy home**

Below, draw a picture of your home. Show how it is healthy. Use pencils, pens, crayons, or markers.

When you are finished, ask a grownup to put this picture on your refrigerator or on a bulletin board for your whole family to see.

### Home visitor’s feedback and follow-up notes

- Please fill in this form after you have completed the lesson and observed any follow-up activities. This training is a pilot program, and the course developers welcome your comments and suggestions on how to improve it.
- Please make a copy of this form, and give the copy to the Family Services Coordinator to forward to the developers. Please place the original in the child’s file.

Learner’s response to this lesson						
Did the learner find the topic	Please check the box that most closely applies					
	Interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boring
	Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to understand
	Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useless
Please summarize the learner’s plans to make changes as a result of this topic.						
Please identify any questions the learner had that were <b>not</b> covered in the topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please summarize any changes the learner actually made as a result of this topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please list the activities that the learner did with his or her child and any comments about those activities.						
Your feedback on this lesson						
What was the most useful part of this lesson?						
What was the least useful part of this lesson?						
Do you have any suggestions for improving this lesson? For example, was the lesson too long or too short, with too much information or not enough information?						
Additional comments						

Your name:

Date:

Topic: Introduction to healthy homes

## Healthy Homes/Healthy Kids

### Asthma Triggers<sup>1</sup>

#### Background information for trainers

**Note: This topic is intended for families in which someone, especially a child, has asthma. It can also be used for families whose friends or relatives have asthma.**

Asthma is a serious lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. Asthma is chronic, which means it is always there, to some degree. It ranges from mild to life-threatening. Although this disease cannot be cured, it can be treated and controlled. People who have asthma **can** live normal lives if their asthma is properly treated by a doctor and if they take the proper medicines to control their symptoms.

Asthma causes problems in the airways (the breathing tubes that carry air into the lungs). During an asthma attack (also called an *asthma episode* or *flare-up*), the airways become swollen, and extra mucus (a thick, slippery, sticky fluid) blocks air from getting to the person's lungs. Muscles around the airways start to twitch and tighten. All of these things make breathing difficult.

Doctors are not certain what causes asthma to develop. However, they do know that the disease is linked to both inherited factors (genetics) and environmental factors. In this topic, we'll focus on the environmental factors.

Environmental factors can start (or **trigger**) an asthma attack. These triggers vary from person to person. Common asthma triggers include

- Things that people are allergic to (like pollen or peanuts),
- Things that irritate the lungs (like tobacco smoke and strong-smelling household chemicals)
- Colds, flu, and other respiratory illnesses
- Cold weather
- Exercise

A person who is having an asthma attack may cough, wheeze, gasp for breath, or feel chest pain or tightness.

**Note: Only a doctor can tell if someone has asthma or some other condition that causes these symptoms.**

If parents or guardians know or suspect that a child has asthma, **they must get and follow medical advice. This topic is not intended to provide any medical advice.** It is intended only to supplement medical advice with information about how to reduce or eliminate asthma triggers.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Eileen Boulay, Connecticut Department of Public Health; Rita Kornblum, City of Hartford Health and Human Services Department; Susan Starkey, Northeast District Department of Health; and Nancy A. Beaudry, Northeast District Department of Health, for their helpful suggestions on this topic.

People with asthma or parents or guardians of children with asthma should work with a doctor. They should

1. Talk to the doctor about ways to control asthma.  
 Work with the doctor to develop a written *asthma action plan*. (See Handout 1 for a sample action plan from the Connecticut Department of Public Health.) An action plan includes information about (a) asthma triggers, (b) what medicines to take and when to take them, (c) what to do in case of an asthma attack, and (d) emergency phone numbers.
2. Follow the doctor's directions about medicines very carefully.  
 Make sure that the person takes the correct medicines that the doctor prescribes. The doctor usually prescribes a *rescue medicine* to relieve acute symptoms of attack and a *controller medicine* to take every day, even when the patient feels well.
3. Identify asthma triggers.  
 Eliminate or reduce as many triggers as possible.
4. Monitor the asthma symptoms.  
 Watch for coughing, wheezing, tightness in the chest, or shortness of breath. If the person has a rescue inhaler, pay attention to how often the person needs to use it.
5. See the doctor regularly for follow-ups or right away if the asthma gets worse.

**Common barriers to good asthma care**

Asthma can be controlled if patients get good medical care and follow the recommended asthma action plan carefully. However, often this ideal situation does not occur. People may use too much medicine, too little, or none at all. They may not follow the recommended schedule. They may not know their asthma triggers or know how to avoid them.

Many reasons for these problems have been identified. Some of the common barriers to good care are listed below.

Delay in getting diagnosed	o Means a delay in getting treatment
Limited access to high-quality care, especially for minorities and poor families	o They are more likely to receive asthma care in an emergency room or clinic, and to see different doctors each time o They are less likely to see an asthma specialist o They are less likely to have regular follow-up care o They may have difficulty getting to doctor's appointments
Difficulty understanding asthma and how to manage it	o The doctor may provide poor instructions, supervision, or follow-up o The doctor may not have given patients or families opportunities to ask questions, express concerns, or otherwise participate actively in planning care o The doctor may not have provided a written asthma action plan o The family or patient may not understand the instructions o The schedules and instructions may be complicated o The family may have language limitations that the doctor does not or cannot address
Issues about medicine	o Patients may have difficulties using an inhaler o Patients may mix up the two kinds of medicines: rescue inhalers and controller inhalers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Patients may worry about side effects</li> <li>○ Patients may feel that the medicine is not very effective</li> <li>○ Patients may feel better and stop taking medicine that should be continued</li> <li>○ Children may refuse to take their medicine</li> <li>○ The medicine may be too expensive for the family</li> <li>○ The family may have difficulty getting to the pharmacy</li> </ul>
Parental or patient beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parents patients may distrust doctors or medicine</li> <li>○ Parents or patients may prefer holistic medicines</li> <li>○ Parents or patients may be unwilling to participate in treatment</li> </ul>

If any medical issues—such as misunderstanding how to use asthma medicines—come up during your home visit, encourage the family to seek help from their doctor or from the Head Start health manager.

Your job is to help the family understand how to manage asthma triggers, not to give medical advice or answer medical questions. Refer families to their doctors or the Head Start health manager for all such information.

### Myths about asthma

Asthma is caused by psychological problems.	<b>Not true.</b> Strong feelings sometimes can start asthma attacks, but the disease itself is a lung problem, not an emotional problem.
Asthma medicine is addictive.	<b>Not true.</b> People with asthma may always need to take their medicines, but that’s because the asthma is lifelong.
When the person with asthma feels fine, the asthma has gone away.	<b>Not true.</b> Asthma is a lifelong condition, although the symptoms may go away until the person is exposed again to asthma triggers.
People with asthma cannot be physically active.	<b>Not true.</b> Everyone needs physical activity. People with asthma may need to take medicine to prevent asthma attacks when they exercise, but physical activity is good for them.

### Resources for trainers

*Putting on Airs* is a free, in-home program that provides asthma education and an environmental assessment of the home to families in which a child or adult has been diagnosed with asthma. A health professional and an environmental health specialist visit the home. The health professional provides asthma education, reviews the proper use of medicines, and reviews the person’s Asthma Action Plan. An environmental health professional assesses the home and recommends practical ways to reduce environmental triggers. For more information, contact the health agency for the town where the family lives (see list below for health agencies in northeastern Connecticut) or call the Connecticut Department of Public Health’s Asthma Program at 860-509-8251.

Northeast District Department of Health (860) 774-7350	Eastern Highlands Health District (860) 429-3325	North Central District Health Department (860) 465-3033
Brooklyn Canterbury Eastford Hampton Killingly Plainfield Pomfret Putnam Sterling Thompson Union Woodstock	Andover Ashford Bolton Chaplin Columbia Coventry Mansfield Scotland Tolland Willington	Ellington Somers Stafford Vernon Windham/Willimantic

### For children

There are many children's books on asthma written for various age groups. Below are just a few. Check [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for additional titles.

DeLand, M. Maitland, *The Great Katie Kate Offers Answers about Asthma* (2013)

Matthies, J., *Peter, the Knight with Asthma* (2009)

Moore-Mallinos, Jennifer, *I Have Asthma* (2007)  
*Tengo asma: I Have Asthma (Spanish Edition)* (2007)

PBSParents, *Kids with Asthma Can!* <http://www.pbs.org/parents/arthur/asthma/index.html>  
Includes a booklist for children and adults

Sesame Street Workshop, "A" Is for Asthma—and for Active! Sesame Workshop,  
<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/health/asthma>

Starlight Foundation, *Quest for the Code® Asthma Game*,  
<http://www.starlight.org/Default.aspx?id=1096&terms=asthma>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Dusty the Asthma Goldfish and His Asthma Triggers Funbook*, [http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pdfs/dustythegoldfish\\_en.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pdfs/dustythegoldfish_en.pdf)

----- *Dusty La Carpa Dorada del Asma y Sus Provocadores de Asma*,  
[http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pdfs/dustythegoldfish\\_sp.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pdfs/dustythegoldfish_sp.pdf)

### For adults

American Lung Association, [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, *All about Asthma*,  
[http://coep.pharmacy.arizona.edu/hope2/aa\\_qifs\\_pdfs/all\\_about\\_asthma.pdf](http://coep.pharmacy.arizona.edu/hope2/aa_qifs_pdfs/all_about_asthma.pdf)

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, Doctor AI and the Sneeze 'n Wheeze Busters,

[http://www.aaaai.org/patients/just4kids/dr\\_allergist/dr\\_allergist\\_coloring\\_book.pdf](http://www.aaaai.org/patients/just4kids/dr_allergist/dr_allergist_coloring_book.pdf)

Asthma Society of Canada, *Triggers*, Asthma Basics Booklet #2,

<http://www.asthma.ca/corp/services/pdf/Triggers.pdf>

Asthma Society of Canada, *Be a Secret Asthma Agent*, Asthma Basics Booklet #4,

<http://www.asthma.ca/corp/services/pdf/Kids.pdf>

Community Asthma Program, *Key Words in Plain Language: Asthma*,

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/files/asthmaglossary.pdf>

KidsHealth, "Dealing with Asthma Triggers,"

[http://kidshealth.org/kid/asthma\\_basics/triggers/asthma\\_triggers.html#](http://kidshealth.org/kid/asthma_basics/triggers/asthma_triggers.html#)

Sesame Street Workshop, *A Guide for Parents of Young Children with Asthma*,

[http://www.sesamestreet.org/cms\\_services/services?action=download&fileName=A\\_is\\_for\\_Asthma:\\_Parent\\_Guide&uid=250b1bca-8fbd-4727-a595-f03be19c0320](http://www.sesamestreet.org/cms_services/services?action=download&fileName=A_is_for_Asthma:_Parent_Guide&uid=250b1bca-8fbd-4727-a595-f03be19c0320)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Help your child gain control over asthma*.

[http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pdfs/ll\\_asthma\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pdfs/ll_asthma_brochure.pdf)

----- *Ayude a su niño a controlar el asma.*

[http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pdfs/controlar\\_el\\_asma.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pdfs/controlar_el_asma.pdf)

## Lesson Plan: Asthma triggers

### Learning objectives

At the end of this topic, learners will be able to

- Recognize the importance of having a written asthma action plan
- Recognize the importance of managing asthma triggers in the environment
- Identify the symptoms of asthma
- List five common environmental triggers for asthma
- Describe methods of reducing or eliminating five common environmental triggers of asthma
- Develop a plan to reduce environmental triggers in their own home

Materials you'll need for this lesson

- Copies of handouts
- Pens or pencils

For children's activities

- Handout 3
  - Red or pink balloon
  - Rubber band or sticky tape
  - Plastic straw
- Handout 4
  - Plain white paper for child to draw asthma triggers
  - 2 small paper bags
  - Crayons, colored markers, pens, or pencils
  - Various decorations: scraps of fabric, colored paper, flat buttons, yarn, string, or anything else you can glue onto the bag
  - White glue
  - Child's safety scissors
- Handout 5
  - Child's safety scissors or regular scissors for adult
  - Colored pencils, pens, crayons, or markers
  - Clean old shoebox or other small box
  - Paper (such as white paper, brown paper bag, or wrapping paper) to cover the box
  - Clean round container (like a large yogurt or cottage cheese container or an oatmeal box)
- Handout 6
  - Child's safety scissors
- Handout 7
  - Child's safety scissors
  - Felt in several colors
  - Fabric glue
  - Permanent marker in several colors
  - Hook and loop (Velcro)

Start with a review of the previous week's topic. See that topic for review suggestions.

**Introduce the new topic: asthma triggers.**



Today we're going to talk about asthma. Asthma is a serious lung disease that makes it hard for people to breathe. People can spend time in the hospital or even die from asthma. Many children miss a lot of school because of asthma.

Although asthma cannot be cured, it can be controlled. People with asthma can live normal, healthy lives. You cannot catch asthma from someone who has it.

Today we'll talk about some ways of controlling asthma. I'm not going to give you medical advice or answer medical questions—you must check with your doctor about all medical issues, and I strongly encourage you to do so. But I can help you learn ways to reduce some of the things that can cause asthma to flare up.

When asthma flares up, several things happen that make breathing difficult:

- The airways, which are tubes that carry air into the lungs, swell up.
- The body makes extra mucus, which is a thick, sticky fluid and which blocks the air from getting to the lungs.
- Muscles around the airways tighten, which means less air can get through.

Ask whether the learner has asthma or any other breathing problem.

- If the answer is yes, DO NOT do the activity below. Instead, ask the learner what an asthma attack or breathing problem feels like.
- If the answer is no, ask whether they would like to get a feeling for what an asthma attack feels like. If the answer to this question is yes, do the activity below.

People who don't have asthma sometimes wonder why it seems so bad. To get an idea of what an asthma attack feels like, try this experience.

With one hand, hold your nose so that you can't breathe out of it. Then put a straw in your mouth and close your lips tightly around it. Now try to breathe in and out only through the straw. How does it feel?

Next, pinch the straw so that it is halfway closed, and try to breathe in and out. How does that feel? Most people find it very difficult to breathe through the straw, especially when it's pinched closed. This is how people with asthma feel when they're having an attack.

Ask.

Do you know what the symptoms of asthma are?

Explain the correct answers if the learner does not know them all.

- Coughing
- Wheezing (a whistling noise when you breathe)
- Tightness, pressure, or pain in the chest
- Trouble breathing

Explain that a doctor must diagnose asthma.

Not everyone who has these symptoms has asthma. The person may have some other condition that causes breathing problems. The only way to know whether a person has asthma is to check with a doctor.

Because asthma can be very serious, it's very important to talk to a doctor about any breathing difficulties. Don't try to diagnose asthma yourself, and don't depend on home remedies, herbal medicines, or over-the-counter medicines. If you suspect that someone has asthma, seek medical care.

Ask whether anyone is having difficulty getting medical attention for asthma. Keep in mind that barriers to good asthma care can include delay in getting diagnosed, limited access to high-quality care, difficulty understanding asthma and how to manage it, issues about medicine, and patient or parental beliefs (as discussed above). If the learner expresses difficulties, check with the Head Start health manager or the Putting on Airs program for help and resources.

Explain the importance of an asthma action plan.

If you do know that someone has asthma, there are ways to help control it.

Controlling asthma starts with developing an asthma action plan with the doctor. An action plan includes information about

- Things that can make asthma flare up (these things are called *asthma triggers*)
- What medicines to take and when to take them
- What to do in case of an asthma attack
- Emergency phone numbers

If someone in the family has been diagnosed with asthma, ask the learner whether that person has a written asthma action plan. If the person has no action plan, encourage him/her to talk to his/her doctor about making a plan as soon as possible

If someone does have an asthma action plan, ask that person whether it would be OK for you to see the plan. If so, in the later part of this lesson, focus on the triggers that are identified on the plan.

Explain the importance of having the asthma action plan readily available.

Copies of the asthma action plan should be available wherever the person goes. For example, a copy of the action plan should be at home, in your purse or wallet, at work, and in the car. If your child has asthma, a copy should be at your child's daycare, babysitter, classroom, school nurse's office, health manager's office, and any other place your child might be. It's especially important for people who might not know the best way to help if your child has an asthma attack when you're not there.

Ask.

Have you put copies of the action plan wherever it might be needed? If not, can you please do so in the next day or two?

If there is no written action plan or the person prefers not to share it with you, distribute Handout 1: Sample Asthma Action Plan from the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Use either Handout 1a (English) or Handout 1b (Spanish). Explain that some action plans may look a little different, but most will cover all of the information shown in this sample.

**Explain asthma triggers.**

Next, let's talk about asthma triggers—the things that start an asthma attack. Different people have different asthma triggers. A person may have one trigger or many. It's important to identify the ones that apply to the particular person with asthma—your child, other family members, or yourself. Your doctor can help identify the right asthma triggers. The doctor may ask you to keep a record of attacks, check how well the lungs function, and test for allergies.

When you have identified the triggers, you can try to avoid them and reduce the chances of having an asthma attack.

**Explain the common asthma triggers. Distribute **Handout 2: Common asthma triggers.** Start with tobacco smoke, the most common asthma trigger.**

You might be wondering what kinds of things can trigger an asthma attack, so you'll know what kinds of things to look for.

One of the most common triggers is tobacco smoke—from a cigarette, cigar, or pipe. It starts with active smoking. Tobacco smoke contains hundreds of poisonous chemicals, such as cyanide, arsenic, and lead, and it can trigger asthma attacks in smokers. But even nonsmokers can be affected. Second-hand smoke—which consists of smoke that smokers breathe out and smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe—can trigger an asthma attack in nonsmokers and can make the attack worse.

Doctors are also becoming concerned with “third-hand smoke,” the chemicals that remain on surfaces after the visible smoke has disappeared. Third-hand smoke can be found on clothing, furniture, carpets, walls, the skin and hair of the smoker, and in household dust. It may be especially dangerous to people with asthma.

**If the person with asthma is a child, ask whether the child is ever around someone who smokes. If the answer is yes, explain the relationship between smoking and asthma in children.**

- Children are more susceptible than are adults to the harmful effects of tobacco smoke.
- Children of smokers are twice as likely to develop asthma as are children of nonsmokers.
- Children whose mothers smoke heavily have more severe asthma symptoms.
- When pregnant women smoke
  - Chemicals in the smoke reach the unborn baby.
  - The baby gets less oxygen and nutrition.
  - The baby may be born prematurely.
- After babies are born, breathing smoke can make their small airways become even smaller. These babies may be more susceptible to breathing problems later in life.

Explain how to avoid tobacco smoke.<sup>2</sup> Using Handout 2, ask the learner to check off actions she/he already takes, actions she/he plans to take (and the start date), and actions she/he will not take. Encourage the learner to follow the recommended actions.

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<sup>2</sup> If smoking is a major problem for a particular family, see also the topic entitled “Tobacco Smoke.”

Since tobacco smoke is a common asthma trigger, here are some ways to avoid it:

- Don't smoke. If you need help quitting, you can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).
- Don't allow other people to smoke in your home or car.
  - Even if you open a window or run a fan, second- and third-hand smoke can harm a child.
- Keep away from people who are smoking—in the homes of friends or relatives, in cars or buses, and in restaurants.
- Keep away from places where people usually smoke.
- If you do come into contact with smoke, remove and clean your clothing, shower, and shampoo your hair as soon as possible.
- Don't bring items (such as used furniture) from a smoker's home into your home.
- Ask smokers to wash their hands well before they touch your child.
- Encourage friends and relatives who smoke to quit. Explain the dangers of second- and third-hand smoke.

Note: If this lesson is too long for a single session, here might be a good place to stop. Continue the following week with a brief review of the information above.

Of course, tobacco isn't the only asthma trigger. Remember that different people have different triggers.

If the family knows of specific triggers for the patient, focus on those triggers. Otherwise, briefly review the triggers on Handout 2. Remind the learner that each person has individual triggers. Some triggers on this list may not apply to a particular individual, and some people may have triggers that are not on this list.

Again, ask the learner to check off actions she/he already takes, actions she/he plans to take (and the start date), and actions she/he will not take. Encourage the learner to follow the recommended actions.

Remind learners of the importance of controlling asthma.

Keep in mind that asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. When people control their asthma, they can

- Breathe easier
- Sleep better
- Miss fewer days of school or work
- Be physically active
- Stay out of the hospital

### Conclusion

Distribute **Handout 3: Tips for reducing asthma triggers**, which summarizes this lesson.

Today we've talked about asthma triggers—the things that may set off an asthma attack—and about ways to reduce the triggers.

Do you think that you'll make any changes as a result of what we've talked about today?

**Note to trainer: Please write down any changes that the learner plans to make. We would like to track the learner’s plans to help measure the effectiveness of this training.**

Explain the homework to the learner.

The homework for this lesson is to carry out as many of the changes that we have discussed as possible. If you cannot carry them all out, please plan for making them in the near future.

**Introduce the activities for children.**

Children can find asthma very frightening—whether it’s their own asthma or that of someone else in the family. If anyone in the family has asthma, children may feel sad or worried.

If the children themselves have asthma, they may feel different from other children, worried about their illness, and worried about their medicines. You can help your child by speaking calmly and honestly about asthma.

School-age children may feel embarrassed by their medicines or their asthma attacks and worried about lots of things, such as having an attack away from home, missing school and having to make up schoolwork, missing events with their friends, and participating in physical activities. Children with asthma can become depressed.

It’s important to help children deal with their feelings about asthma. Here are some ways to help.

Distribute **Handout 3: Use a balloon to illustrate asthma.**

Note, however, that if the learner has asthma, he or she should not blow up a balloon.

If anyone in your home (your child or another member of the family) has asthma, talk with the child about asthma. Explain what asthma is.

Distribute **Handout 4: Talking about asthma with hand puppets.**

<b>If your child has asthma, help your child understand</b>	<b>If someone else in your home has asthma, help your child understand</b>
Explain that asthma is serious but it can be controlled.	Explain that asthma is serious but it can be controlled.
Use a doll or other toy to show him or her how to use asthma medicines.	Use a doll or other toy to show your child how the other person will use asthma medicines.
Explain your child’s asthma triggers.	Explain the other person’s asthma triggers.
Find some books in the library about asthma and read them to your child.	Find some books in the library about asthma and read them to your child.
Ask the doctor, nurse, school nurse, or health manager to talk to your child and his or her classmates about asthma.	Ask the doctor, nurse, school nurse, or health manager to talk to your child about asthma.

<b>If your child has asthma, help your child understand</b>	<b>If someone else in your home has asthma, help your child understand</b>
Make sure that your child and his or her teachers, babysitters, and other caregivers know what to do in case of an asthma attack. Follow the asthma action plan.	Make sure that your child knows to tell an adult if he or she sees someone else having an asthma attack.

**Handout 5: Asthma triggers sorting game** and **Handout 6: Asthma triggers concentration game** help reinforce some common asthma triggers. **Handout 7: Decorate a child's inhaler case** explains how to make a simple case for an asthma inhaler for a child who needs one. Distribute those activities that you think are most suitable to a particular family.

### Evaluation

Please complete the **Home visitor's feedback and follow-up notes** after you have finished the lesson. You may wish to wait until your next visit to answer the follow-up questions about what changes the learner has made and what activities the learner has used with his or her children. Then return the form to the Family Services Coordinator.

### Review

After you have completed this topic, you may want to review it with the learner during your next home visit. Ask what the learner remembers.

During our last visit, we talked about asthma triggers. Would you like to tell me what you remember about what we said?

See how much the learner recalls. You might remind the learner of the following information.

- We explained that although asthma cannot be cured, it can be controlled.
- It's important to work with a doctor to develop an asthma action plan.
- Asthma triggers are things that start an asthma attack.
- It's important to learn what a person's own asthma triggers are and then to avoid them as much as possible.
- Tobacco smoke is one of the most common asthma triggers.
- Other common indoor asthma triggers include dust mites, pets, mold, house dust, pests, wood smoke, and some medicines, household products, personal products, and foods.
- Common outdoor triggers are pollen, pollution, and weather.
- Other possible triggers are respiratory illnesses, exercise, and emotions.

Ask open-ended questions, such as the ones below. Make a note of any progress the learner has made or any questions the learner may have about this topic.


- How are you doing with controlling asthma triggers?
- Do you have any questions about this topic?
- Have you had an opportunity to do any of the activities with your child? If so, how did those go?

## Handout 1a Sample Asthma Action Plan (English)

This is an example of an Asthma Action Plan from the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Your doctor and you should fill out this plan. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about it. Keep a copy at home, in your purse or wallet, at work, in the car, at your child's daycare, and any other place your child might be.

### Asthma Action Plan

Name:		Date:	
Birth Date:	Provider Phone #:	Provider Fax #	
Patient Goal:		Parent/Guardian Phone #	
Important!: Things that make your asthma worse: (Triggers) <input type="checkbox"/> dust <input type="checkbox"/> pets <input type="checkbox"/> mold <input type="checkbox"/> smoke <input type="checkbox"/> pollen <input type="checkbox"/> other _____			




**Severity:**  Severe Persistent  Moderate Persistent  Mild Persistent  Mild Intermittent

**GO – You're Doing Well!**
**Use these medicines everyday:**

PERSONAL BEST PEAK FLOW: \_\_\_\_\_

**You have *all* of these:**

- Breathing is good
- No cough or wheeze
- Sleep through the night
- Can work and play




Peak flow from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICINE	HOW MUCH	HOW OFTEN / WHEN

**CAUTION – Slow Down!**
**Continue with green zone medicine and add:**

**You have *any* of these:**

- First signs of a cold
- Exposure to known trigger
- Cough
- Mild wheeze
- Tight Chest
- Coughing at night



Peak flow from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_


MEDICINE	HOW MUCH	HOW OFTEN / WHEN

CALL YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER: \_\_\_\_\_

**DANGER – Get Help!**
**Take these medicines and call your provider now.**

**Your Asthma is *getting worse* fast:**

- Medicine is not helping
- Breathing is hard and fast
- Nose opens wide
- Ribs show
- Can't talk well



Peak flow less than \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICINE	HOW MUCH	HOW OFTEN / WHEN

Get help from a provider now! Do not be afraid of causing a fuss. Your provider will want to see you right away. It's important! If you cannot contact your provider, go directly to the emergency room and bring this form with you. **DO NOT WAIT.** Make an appointment with your primary care provider within two days of an ED visit or hospitalization.

Provider Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT/GUARDIAN TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

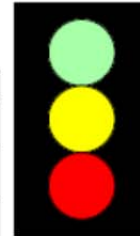
I, \_\_\_\_\_ give permission to the school nurse and/or the school-based health  
(parent/guardian name-please print)  
 clinic to exchange information and otherwise assist in the asthma management of my child including direct communication with my  
 child's primary care provider \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(parent/guardian signature)

REFER TO THE BACK OF THE LAST PAGE FOR THE MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM

## Handout 1b Sample Asthma Action Plan (Spanish)

This is an example of an Asthma Action Plan from the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Your doctor and you should fill out this plan. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about it. Keep a copy at home, in your purse or wallet, at work, in the car, at your child's daycare, and any other place your child might be.

### Plan de acción contra el asma



Nombre:		Fecha:
Fecha de nacimiento:	Nombre del proveedor:	Fax del proveedor:
Meta del paciente:		Teléfono del padre o tutor:
<b>¡Importante!</b> Las cosas que empeoran su asma: <input type="checkbox"/> polco <input type="checkbox"/> animal domestico <input type="checkbox"/> molde <input type="checkbox"/> Humo <input type="checkbox"/> Polen <input type="checkbox"/> otro		

**Severidad:**  Severos Persistente  Moderado Persistente  Suave Persistente  Suave Intermitente

**SEGURO – ¡ESTÁ BIEN!** Use estas medicinas controladoras cada día:

Mejor marca personal de flujo máximo: \_\_\_\_\_

Tiene todos estos síntomas:

- Respiración normal
- No hay tos ni jadeo
- Duermo en la noche
- Puede trabajar y jugar



Flujo máximo de \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICINA	CANTIDAD	FRECUENCIA/HORA
_____	_____ Inhalar	_____ veces al día
_____	_____ Pastillas	_____ día / noche
_____	_____ Nebulizador	
_____	_____ Inhalar	_____ veces al día
_____	_____ Tabs	_____ día / noche
_____	_____ Nebulizador	

**PRECAUCION – ¡Detengase!** Continúe con la medicina de la zona verde y agregue:

Tiene cualquiera de estos síntomas:

- Síntomas de resfriado
- Exposición a factores que provocaron asma
- Tos
- Jadeo leve
- Tirantez en el pecho
- Tos en la noche



Flujo Máximo de \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICINA	CANTIDAD	FRECUENCIA/HORA
_____	_____ Inhaler	_____ veces al día
_____	_____ Pastillas	_____ día / noche
_____	_____ Nebulizador	
_____	_____ Inhaler	_____ veces al día
_____	_____ Pastillas	_____ día / noche
_____	_____ Nebulizador	

LLAME AL PROVEEDOR MÉDICO DE CABECERA: \_\_\_\_\_

**PELIGRO- ¡OBTENGA AYUDA!** Tome estas medicinas y llame al proveedor ahora.

El asma empeora rápidamente:

- La medicina no está ayudando
- Respiración difícil y rápida
- La nariz se abre
- Se ven las costillas
- Dificultad para hablar



Flujo menos que \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICINA	CANTIDAD	FRECUENCIA/HORA
_____	_____ Inhalar	_____ veces al día
_____	_____ Pastillas	_____ día / noche
_____	_____ Nebulizador	
_____	_____ Inhalar	_____ veces al día
_____	_____ Pastillas	_____ día / noches
_____	_____ Nebulizador	

¡Obtenga ayuda de un proveedor ahora! No tema molestar. ¡El proveedor querrá verle enseguida. ¡Es de suma importancia! Si no puede comunicarse con el proveedor, vaya directamente a la sala de emergencia y lleve esta formulario. NO ESPERE. Haga una cita con el proveedor médico dentro de los dos días después de una visita o estancia en el hospital.

Firma del proveedor: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Yo, \_\_\_\_\_, doy permiso al enfermero de la escuela o a la clínica de salud de la escuela para (padre/guarda por favor nombre imprime) compartir información o de otra manera para asistir en el asma de mi hijo (a), incluyendo la comunicación directa con el proveedor médico de cabecera \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_ (firma de padre/ guarda)




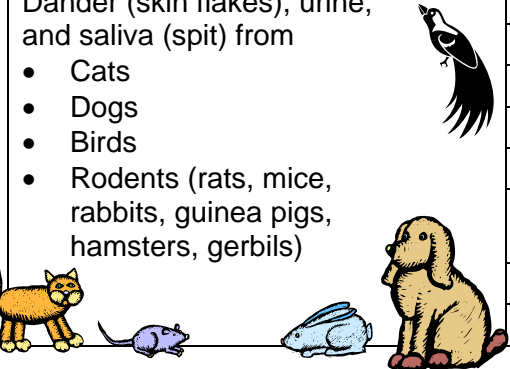
## Handout 2 Common asthma triggers



Check off (✓) the actions that you already take, the actions you plan to take (and the date for starting them), and the actions you do not plan to take.

Indoors				
Possible Triggers	What You Can Do If This Is a Trigger	I do this now	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this
<b>Tobacco smoke<sup>3</sup></b>				
Active smoking (smoking a cigarette, cigar, or pipe)  Second-hand smoke (smoke from someone else's cigarette, cigar, or pipe)  Third-hand smoke (chemicals that remain after visible smoke has disappeared)	Don't smoke.			
	Don't let other people smoke in your home or car. Even if you open a window or run a fan, second- and third-hand smoke can harm a child.			
	Keep away from people who are smoking—in the homes of friends or relatives, in cars or buses, and in restaurants.			
	Keep away from places where people usually smoke.			
	If you do come into contact with smoke, remove and clean your clothing, shower, and shampoo your hair as soon as possible.			
	Don't bring items (such as used furniture) from a smoker's home into your home.			
	Ask smokers to wash their hands well before they touch your child.			
	Encourage friends and relatives who smoke to quit. Explain the dangers of second- and third-hand smoke.			




<sup>3</sup> If tobacco smoke is a serious problem, see also the topic entitled "Tobacco Smoke."



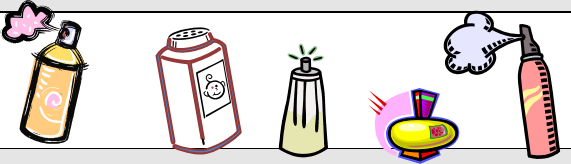
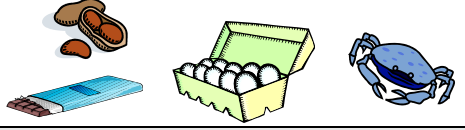
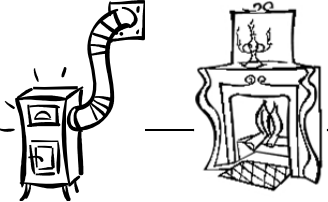
Indoors					
Possible Triggers	What You Can Do If This Is a Trigger	I do this now	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this	
<b>Dust mites</b>					
<p>Very, very tiny insects that live in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mattresses and pillows</li> <li>• Sheets and pillowcases</li> <li>• Blankets and bedspreads</li> <li>• Carpets</li> <li>• Fabric-covered furniture</li> <li>• Clothes</li> <li>• Stuffed toys</li> </ul> 	<b>Toys</b>				
	Choose stuffed toys that are washable or toys that are not stuffed.				
	Wash them once a week in very hot water, and dry them completely.				
	Keep stuffed toys off the beds.				
	<b>Bedding</b>				
	Wash sheets, pillowcases, blankets, and bedspreads once a week in hot water.				
	Use washable polyester pillows and comforters, not down or feathers.				
	Cover mattresses and pillows with washable dust-proof or allergy covers, and wipe or vacuum them once a week.				
	<b>Bedrooms</b>				
	Keep bedrooms free of items that collect dust, such as clutter, miniblinds, heavy curtains, and upholstered furniture.				
If possible, remove wall-to-wall carpets and replace with wood or linoleum flooring.					
Dust and damp mop or vacuum bedroom floors at least once a week.					
<b>Pets</b>					
<p>Dander (skin flakes), urine, and saliva (spit) from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cats</li> <li>• Dogs</li> <li>• Birds</li> <li>• Rodents (rats, mice, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils)</li> </ul> 	Always keep pets—even small ones in cages—out of the bedroom.				
	Keep the bedroom door closed.				
	Keep pets away from fabric-covered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys.				
	Don't hug or kiss the pet.				
	Wash hands after touching a pet.				
	If someone still has asthma attacks, you may need to find a new home for your pet, or at least keep it outdoors.				
	Instead of pets with fur or feathers, consider fish.				
Check with your child's teacher about classroom pets.					

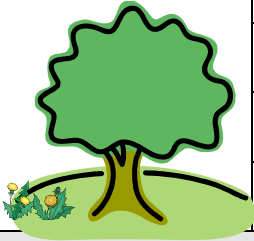


Indoors				
Possible Triggers	What You Can Do If This Is a Trigger	I do this now	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this
<p><b>Mold<sup>4</sup></b>                      Tiny living things that grow on damp materials</p> 	Reduce moisture in your home.			
	Identify and fix any water problems, such as leaks, promptly.			
	If possible, use a dehumidifier. Empty and clean dehumidifier frequently so that mold does not grow in it. Avoid humidifiers.			
	Open windows or use exhaust fans in kitchens when you cook and in bathrooms when you shower.			
	If possible, remove carpeting from bathrooms.			
	Reduce clutter that can hold moisture.			
	If basement is damp, do not let children play there, and do not store clothing or toys there.			
	Keep your home as clean as possible.			
	For hard surfaces (like walls and bathtubs), scrub with a mixture of household detergent and water. Dry thoroughly.			
	Wash bath mats frequently in hot water.			
	Wash shower curtains and liners frequently.			
	Clean and dry drip pans under refrigerators and air conditioners.			
<p><b>House dust</b>                      Ordinary dust may contain asthma triggers</p> 	Cleaning			
	Dust often with a damp cloth.			
	Where possible, clean with a damp mop.			
	Vacuum your carpet and fabric-covered furniture frequently. If possible, use a special anti-allergy bag for your vacuum cleaner.			
	Keep the person with asthma out of the room during vacuuming and dusting.			
	Preventing dust			
	Try to keep bedrooms free of dust-collecting items, such as stuffed toys, books, and games. If possible, remove carpets from bedrooms.			




<sup>4</sup> If mold is a serious problem, see also the topic entitled "Mold and Moisture."

Indoors				
Possible Triggers	What You Can Do If This Is a Trigger	I do this now	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this
<b>Pests<sup>5</sup></b>				
<p>Droppings or body parts from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cockroaches</li> <li>• Rats</li> <li>• Mice</li> </ul> 	Take away food, water, and shelter for pests			
	Clean up kitchen counters, cabinets, and shelves. A small crumb can be a large feast for a pest.			
	Clean up food spills right away.			
	Put leftovers in the refrigerator or throw them away.			
	Store food in airtight containers.			
	Wash dirty dishes promptly.			
	Keep garbage cans covered, and take out garbage at least once a day.			
	Fix leaky pipes right away, or ask the property owner to do so.			
	Clean up places where pests hide, such as clutter.			
	Keep pests out			
	Seal holes in walls			
	Check things that you bring home, such as used furniture or clothing.			
	Capture or kill pests without using dangerous chemicals			
	Swat or stomp flying or crawling insects.			
	Use snap traps or glue boards for mice, and sticky paper for bugs			
	Use chemicals (pesticides) only when other methods fail			
	Use the safest possible pesticide.			
	Follow label directions carefully.			
	Keep the person with asthma out of the room during spraying and until the area has had a chance to air out.			
	Open windows if you spray.			
Apply <b>only</b> to infested areas.				
Never allow children to handle pesticides.				

<sup>5</sup> If pests are a serious problem, see also the topic entitled “Controlling Pests Safely.”














<b>Indoors</b>				
<b>Possible Triggers</b>	<b>What You Can Do If This Is a Trigger</b>	I do this now	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this
<b>Some medicines</b>				
Aspirin Some heart medicines Some herbal remedies	Talk to your doctor about different medicines.			
<b>Some household products</b>				
Cleaning supplies Sprays Liquid chlorine bleach Paint Pesticides Scented candles Incense	Avoid products with strong odors as much as possible. Use alternative products, such as baking soda and vinegar for cleaning. If you must use such products, do so when the person with asthma is not present, and open windows to provide fresh air. Avoid aerosol sprays whenever possible. Instead, use pump bottles, liquids, or roll-ons.			
<b>Some personal products</b>				
Perfumes or colognes Talcum powder Hairspray	Avoid using them.			
<b>Some foods</b>				
Nuts and peanut butter Chocolate Eggs Shellfish Sulfites (a preservative in some foods)	Read ingredients lists of packaged foods carefully. Avoid foods that trigger asthma attacks.			
<b>Wood smoke</b>				
Wood stoves Fireplaces	Avoid wood fires.			

Outdoors				
Possible Triggers	What You Can Do If This Is a Trigger	I do this now	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this
<b>Pollen</b>				
Pollens from trees, grass, weeds 	If possible, stay indoors when pollen counts are especially high. Check the weather reports to learn about pollen counts.			
	Keep windows closed and use air conditioning, if it is available.			
	If you are driving when there is a lot of pollen outside, keep the car windows shut and use air conditioning.			
	If you do go outside, take a shower and change your clothes when you come inside again.			
<b>Pollution</b>				
Auto or bus exhaust Ozone Smog 	If possible, stay indoors when there is a lot of air pollution outside. Check the weather reports to learn about air pollution levels.			
	Avoid standing near vehicle exhaust.			
<b>Weather</b>				
Cold, dry air Damp, stormy, or windy weather Sudden temperature changes 	Wear a ski mask or a scarf loosely over the nose and mouth to warm cold air before breathing.			
	Talk to your doctor about what you can do before and during the exercise.			
	Avoid outdoor exercise when the weather is very cold.			

<b>Other</b>				
For some people, asthma triggers can also include illnesses and other factors that are not environmental.				
Possible Triggers	What You Can Do If This Is a Trigger	I do this now	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this
<b>Respiratory illnesses</b>				
Common cold Flu or influenza 	Wash hands often.			
	Talk with your doctor about getting flu shots.			
<b>Exercise</b>				
Sports Gym class Dancing Running for a bus 	Talk to your doctor about what you can do before and during the exercise.			
	Avoid outdoor exercise in cold weather.			
<b>Emotions</b>				
Anger Fear Stress Happiness	Learn healthy ways to manage your stress			
	Pay attention to feelings. 			

### Handout 3 Tips for reducing asthma triggers

Remember that asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. Below are some of the most common asthma triggers and ways to reduce them. Keep in mind that it's important to work with a doctor to make an asthma action plan.

Dust and dust mites		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean often with a damp cloth or damp mop</li> <li>• Vacuum carpets and fabric-covered furniture often</li> <li>• Avoid items that collect dust, like clutter</li> </ul>
Emotions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn healthy ways to manage your stress</li> </ul>
Exercise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your doctor about what you can do before and after exercise</li> </ul>
Household products, like cleaning supplies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid products with strong smells</li> <li>• Avoid aerosol products</li> </ul>
Mold		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fix leaks and other water problems right away</li> <li>• Wash bath mats, shower curtains, and liners often</li> </ul>
Personal products, like perfume and hairspray		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid using them</li> </ul>
Pests		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take away their food, water, and shelter, by keeping home clean, dry, and free of clutter</li> <li>• Keep pests out, by sealing holes and cracks in walls</li> <li>• Capture or kills pests without using dangerous chemicals</li> <li>• Use pesticides carefully and only if other methods fail</li> </ul>
Pets		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider pets that have no fur or feathers</li> <li>• Keep pets out of the bedroom</li> <li>• Wash hands after touching a pet</li> </ul>
Pollen		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep windows closed if possible</li> </ul>
Pollution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay indoors if possible</li> </ul>
Respiratory illnesses		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash hands often</li> </ul>
Tobacco smoke		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't smoke</li> <li>• Don't allow anyone else to smoke in your home or car</li> </ul>
Wood smoke		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid wood fires</li> </ul>



## Handout 4      Activity for children: Use a balloon to illustrate asthma

If anyone in the family has asthma, talk to your child about this condition. An asthma attack—whether in the child or another family member—can be very frightening. You can help make it less frightening by explaining asthma honestly and calmly.

Explain that

- Asthma sometimes makes it hard for people to breathe.
- A person cannot catch asthma from another person.
- Asthma is a serious problem but it can be controlled if the person with asthma works with a doctor and avoid the things that trigger asthma attacks.
- People cannot get rid of asthma, but they can control it.
- People with asthma can live normal, active, healthy lives.

You can show your child how lungs work and what happens when asthma flares up.<sup>6</sup>

**Note:** Do not do this part of the activity if **you** have asthma.

### What you'll need

- A red or pink balloon
- A rubber band or sticky tape
- A plastic straw

### Directions

Action	Tell your child
1. Get a red or pink balloon. Breathe in and out to make the balloon larger and smaller several times.	The balloon is like our lungs. When air moves in and out of the balloon, it's like the way air goes in and out of our lungs when we breathe.
2. Use a rubber band or sticky tape to attach a plastic straw to the balloon.	The straw is like the tubes, called airways, that bring air to our lungs.
3. Breathe through the straw to make the balloon larger. Then let air out to make the balloon smaller	This is how air comes in and out of our airways.
4. Pinch the straw so that it is nearly closed and try to blow air into the balloon. Show that it's much harder to get air into the balloon now.	This is what happens to the airways during an asthma attack.

<sup>6</sup> This activity was adapted from [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_6169438\\_describe-asthma-children.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_6169438_describe-asthma-children.html).

## Handout 5      Activity for Children: Talking about Asthma with Hand Puppets

### What you'll need

- Plain white paper for child to draw asthma triggers
- 2 small paper bags
- Crayons, colored markers, pens, or pencils
- Various decorations: scraps of fabric, colored paper, flat buttons, yarn, string, or anything else you can glue onto the bag
- White glue
- Child's safety scissors

### Directions

1. Explain that people have two lungs, which we use for breathing.
2. Explain that each bag represents one lung.
3. Have your child draw lungs on each paper bag. The lungs might look like balloons, or faces, or just shapes—however your child imagines lungs to look.
4. Have your child decorate the bags by drawing on them or by cutting out shapes from paper or fabric and gluing those shapes or other small objects onto the bags. Fabric or paper can be cut into shapes for nose, lips, eyes, eyelashes, and eyebrows. They can also become clothing. Strips of paper, yarn, or string can become hair.
5. Let the glue dry. Then you and your child can play with the hand puppets. You can use one hand puppet and your child can use the other. Or you can give your child both hand puppets. Use the puppets to talk about asthma.

Explain that people have two lungs, and these puppets are like the lungs of the person with asthma. Tell your child that these lungs can talk to each other. These lungs are going to talk about breathing and asthma.

If your child has asthma, you might ask the following questions. Tell your child the correct answer if he or she doesn't know it.

Questions	Your child might answer
Do you know what asthma is?	Asthma is a problem with your lungs that sometimes makes it hard for you to breathe.
How does having an asthma attack make you feel?	[Varies with the child. For example, one child might say it makes her feel like a fish out of water or a wheezing turtle. Another child might say it feels like an elephant is sitting on his chest.]
If your child has an asthma action plan, explain it in simple terms that your child can understand. You might use some of the questions below.	
What medicines do you take to help you with your asthma?	[Varies with the child. Medicines may include something to take every day and a quick-relief inhaler (or puffer) to use during an attack.]
Do you know what an asthma trigger is?	A trigger is something that starts an asthma attack.

Questions	Your child might answer
<p>Do you know what your triggers are?</p> <p>If your child does not know, explain his or her triggers.</p> <p>Then you can ask him or her to draw pictures of the triggers.</p>	[Varies with the child.]
Do you know how to avoid your triggers?	[Varies with the child. See Handout 2 for some answers.]
What should you do if you start to have trouble breathing?	<p>Stop what you're doing.</p> <p>Tell a grownup right away.</p> <p>[The grownup should follow the directions in the child's asthma action plan.]</p>

If someone else in your family has asthma, have your child talk about that person's breathing problems. You can adapt the questions above.

Questions	Your child might answer
Do you know what asthma is?	Asthma is a problem with your lungs that sometimes makes it hard for you to breathe.
How do you think [the person] feels when having an asthma attack?	[Varies with the child. Some children say it makes them feel like a fish out of water or a wheezing turtle. Other children say it feels like an elephant is sitting on their chest.]
Does [the person] take medicine to help with the asthma?	[Varies with the child. Medicines may include something to take every day and a quick-relief inhaler (or puffer).]
Do you know what an asthma trigger is?	A trigger is something that starts an asthma attack.
<p>If you know what the person's triggers are, explain them to your child.</p> <p>Then you can ask him or her to draw pictures of the triggers.</p>	[Varies with the child.]
Can you help [the person] avoid his/her asthma triggers?	[Varies with the child.]
What should you do if you see [the person] start to have trouble breathing?	Tell a grownup right away.

Extend this activity.

- Find some books in the library about asthma and read to them to your child.

## Handout 6      Activity for children: Asthma triggers sorting game

Instructions for adults: You can use this activity to help your child learn about things that can start an asthma attack (asthma triggers). Below are some triggers that can start an asthma attack for some people. If someone in your home has asthma, you can add that person's asthma triggers to the activity if they are not already included.

Here are the correct answers: Things that can start an asthma attack are dust mites, cockroaches, cigarette smoke, mouse, paint smell, teddy bear, dog, dust, and perfume.

There are several ways to do this activity: choose the option that works best for you and your child.

### Option 1: Trash the triggers

1. Take a clean old shoebox or other small box, and label it with your child's name and the words "Healthy home." Take a large yogurt or cottage cheese container or an oatmeal box and label it "Asthma triggers."

You and your child can decorate the shoebox. You might cover it with plain white paper, a cut-up brown paper bag, wrapping paper, or a piece of fabric.

Then your child can draw on the shoebox, use child-safe glue to attach decorations (such as pictures cut out from magazines, small drawings, or pieces of ribbon), or otherwise use his or her imagination to make the box personal.

If you wish, you can also decorate the container labeled "Asthma triggers."

2. Have your child use safety scissors to cut out all the words in the boxes below, or cut out the words for your child.

You can paste the cut-out words on foam core board, card stock, or other heavy paper.

Or you can write the words on card stock and have your child draw pictures to illustrate the words.

3. Read each word or set of words aloud to your child. Explain any words that your child does not understand.
4. Next ask your child to put the pictures that describe a healthy home into the shoebox. Then ask your child to put the words that describe asthma triggers into the container that represents a trash can.

### Option 2: Paper pile sorting healthy home

1. Have your child use safety scissors to cut out all the words in the boxes below, or cut out the words for your child.
2. Read each word or set of words aloud to your child. Explain any words that your child does not understand.
3. Next ask your child to sort the words into two piles—one pile that describes a healthy home and one pile that describes asthma triggers. Then have your children draw a picture of a healthy home.

**Option 3: Beanbag asthma triggers**

Make this activity into a beanbag toss. Put words or pictures on beanbags and have children toss the beanbags into the healthy home or into the asthma triggers container.

**Option 4: Stand up, sit down**












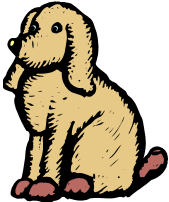
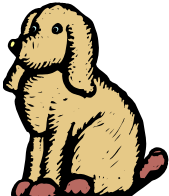



Have your child pick one of the words. You read the word to the child.

If the word describes a healthy home, have the child stand up and do something, like clap his hands, pat her own head, or stand on one foot. If the word describes an asthma trigger, have the child sit down.

<p>Dust mites</p> 	<p>Cockroaches</p> 	<p>Riding toy</p> 	<p>Cigarette smoke</p> 
<p>Medicine that the doctor tells you to take</p> 	<p>Goldfish</p> 	<p>Mouse</p> 	<p>Paint smell</p> 
<p>Plastic car</p> 	<p>Teddy bear</p> 	<p>Reading a book</p> 	<p>Dog</p> 
 <p>Inhaler that the doctor tells you to use</p>	<p>Broccoli</p> 	<p>Dust</p> 	<p>Perfume</p> 

## Handout 7 Activity for children: Asthma triggers concentration game

Directions for adults: The goal of the game is to find matching pairs of pictures. Play this game with your child. Help your child cut out the cards below. Mix them up, and lay them on a table, with four rows of four pictures each, but with the pictures facing down. Have your child turn over two cards. If the pictures match, your child gets to keep the cards and gets to take another turn. If the cards do not match, turn the cards back over and put them back in place. Then you take a turn, trying to find a match. Continue until all the cards have been matched. The winner is the person who has collected the most cards. You can play again by mixing up the cards before starting from the beginning.

<p>Paint smell</p> 	<p>Cockroaches</p> 	<p>Paint smell</p> 	<p>Cigarette smoke</p> 
<p>Teddy bear</p> 	<p>Dust</p> 	<p>Mouse</p> 	<p>Cigarette smoke</p> 
<p>Mouse</p> 	<p>Teddy bear</p> 	<p>Cockroaches</p> 	<p>Dog</p> 
<p>Dog</p> 	<p>Perfume</p> 	<p>Dust</p> 	<p>Perfume</p> 

## Handout 8      Activity for children: Decorate a child's inhaler case

Make a simple felt case for your child's inhaler. Then have your child decorate the case.<sup>7</sup>

### What you'll need

- Child's safety scissors
- Felt in several colors
- Fabric glue
- Permanent marker in several colors
- Hook and loop (Velcro)
- Case template (next page)

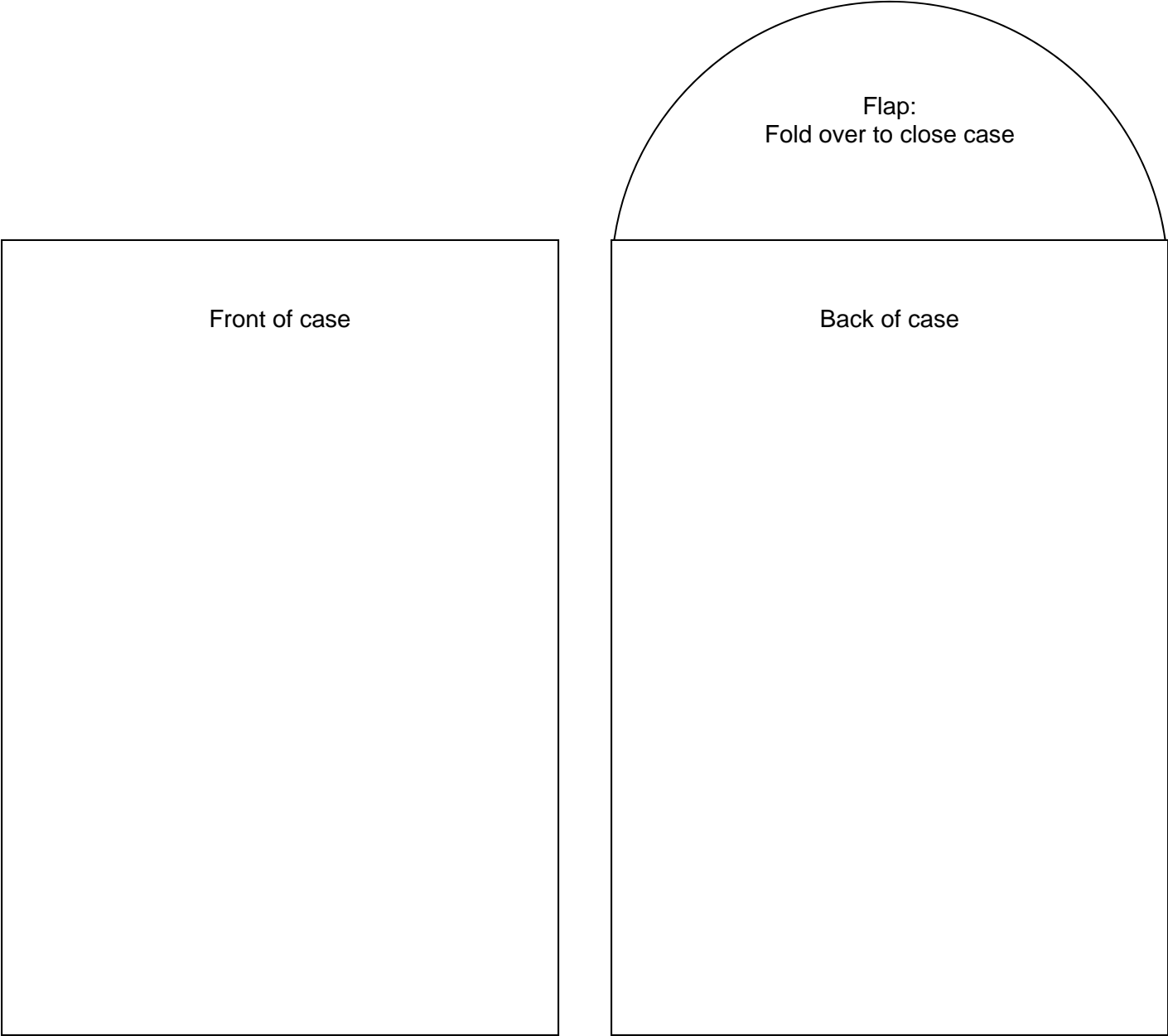
### Directions

1. Your part: Make the basic case
  - Cut out the templates on the next page.
  - Use a marker to trace the templates onto pieces of felt. Then cut out the felt pieces.
  - Start with the smaller piece (rectangle). Apply a line of fabric glue along the two long sides and the bottom.
  - Line up the bottom of the smaller piece with the bottom of the larger piece. Attach the two pieces by pressing along the lines of glue.
  - Let the glue dry completely.
  - If you want, you can turn the case inside out to hide the seams.
2. Your child's part: Decorate the case with markers or felt shapes or both
  - Markers
    - Give your child different colors of permanent marker to draw shapes on the case.
    - Your child might like to draw pictures of his or her asthma triggers, as reminders.
  - Felt shapes
    - Give your child a marker to draw small shapes on different colors of felt.
    - Your child might like to draw shapes to make a face or other shapes.
    - If your child has trouble drawing, help him or her trace and cut out some of the shapes on the page following the template.
  - Help your child to cut out these shapes (use a child-safe scissors) and glue them onto the case.
3. Your part: Finish the case
  - Cut out small pieces of hook-and-loop material. Glue one piece to the flap and one piece to the front of the case.

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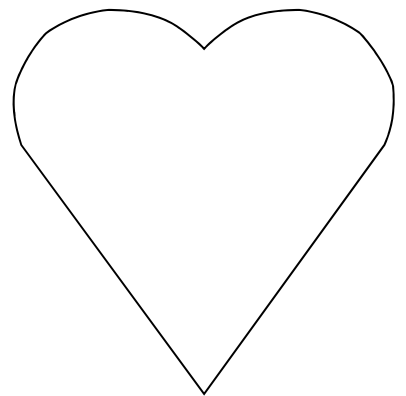
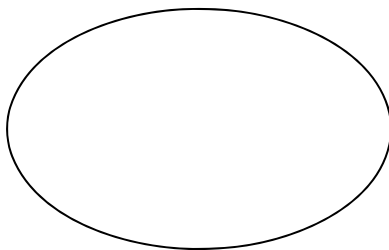
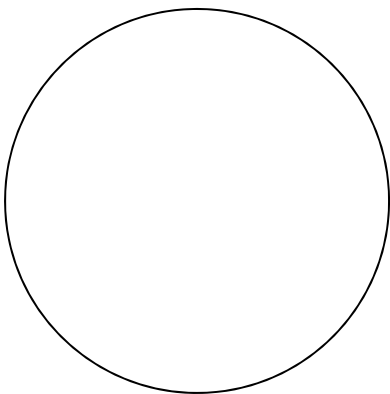
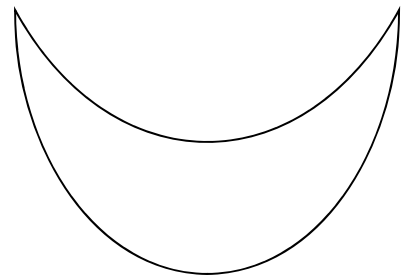
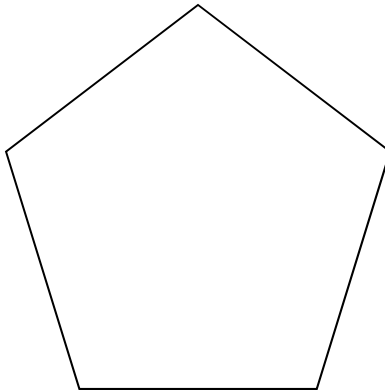
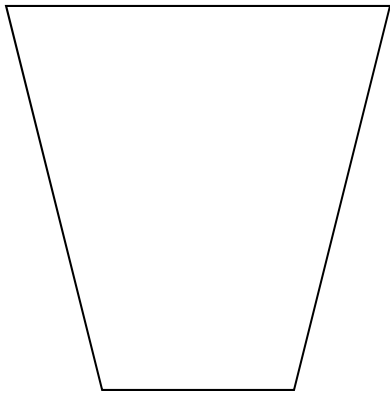
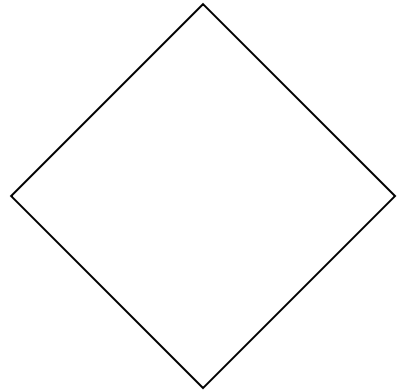
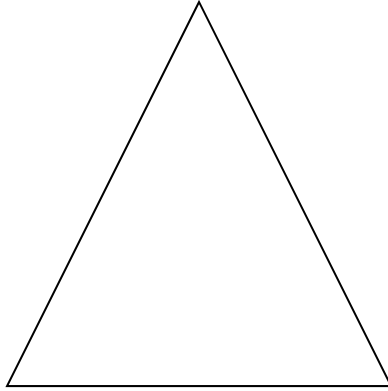
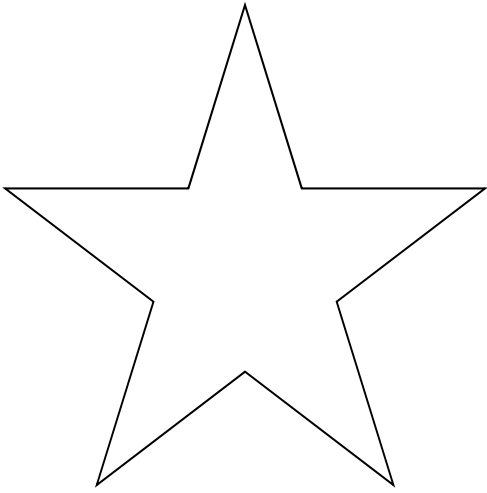
<sup>7</sup> Adapted from <http://www.nickjr.com/crafts/yo-gabba-asthma-inhaler-case.jhtml>

Case template





Shapes to decorate the case



### Home visitor’s feedback and follow-up notes

- Please fill in this form after you have completed the lesson and observed any follow-up activities. This training is a pilot program, and the course developers welcome your comments and suggestions on how to improve it.
- Please make a copy of this form, and give the copy to the Family Services Coordinator to forward to the developers. Please place the original in the child’s file.

Learner’s response to this lesson						
Did the learner find the topic	Please check the box that most closely applies					
	Interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boring
	Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to understand
	Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useless
Please summarize the learner’s plans to make changes as a result of this topic.						
Please identify any questions the learner had that were <b>not</b> covered in the topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please summarize any changes the learner actually made as a result of this topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please list the activities that the learner did with his or her child and any comments about those activities.						
Your feedback on this lesson						
What was the most useful part of this lesson?						
What was the least useful part of this lesson?						
Do you have any suggestions for improving this lesson? For example, was the lesson too long or too short, with too much information or not enough information?						
Additional comments						

Your name:

Date:

Topic: Asthma triggers

## Healthy Homes/Healthy Kids

### Controlling Clutter<sup>1</sup>

#### Background information for trainers

Clutter is a messy or disorganized accumulation of items or stuff. Clutter consists of too much stuff in too small a space. It can include anything that people don't need, use, or want—from broken toys to outgrown clothing to old magazines. Many people have at least some clutter, whether it's a pile of papers on the kitchen counter or a bunch of items stuffed in a single junk drawer, scattered across a single room, or spread throughout an entire house.

When we have too much clutter, it can interfere with our lives. Clutter soaks up time and energy.

- It takes longer to find the things we need in a cluttered space—15 minutes instead of 30 seconds to find the house keys, for example.
- It takes more effort to walk around piles of clutter on the floor to get what we need from the closet—if we can even find what we need in a crowded closet.
- We may be less able to relax or enjoy our homes when we are surrounded by clutter.
- We may be reluctant to invite guests because we're embarrassed by the clutter.
- We may have to spend money buying duplicate items because we can't find what we already own.
- Clutter can cause tension among family members.

Clutter can also create unhealthy living conditions.

- Clutter can cause several serious problems for people with asthma:
  - Clutter often accumulates dirt and dust, as well as allergens (substances like pet hair and pollen that can cause allergic reactions).
  - Clutter may provide homes for pests, such as bugs and mice.
  - Clutter can store moisture, creating mold and mildew problems.
- Clutter can also increase the risk of injuries from tripping, falling, or fires.
- A cluttered home may make life especially difficult for children affected by attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), because it offers too much stimulation. A neat, simple environment may help these children function better.

However, people who live with a lot of clutter may find it very difficult to change their cluttering habits.

- They may be reluctant to give up any of their stuff.
- They may be afraid that they'll someday need an item.
- They may not want to waste something they have bought.
- They may feel anxious if items are out of sight or are hard to reach (for example, put away in an overstuffed closet or drawer).
- They may feel strong emotional attachment to their possessions, even items that seem to have little or no value to other people.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Mary Ellen Welch, University of Connecticut, Department of Extension, for her many helpful suggestions on this topic.

Clutter can be associated with various psychological issues, from moderate guilt over a messy home to serious hoarding problems. This topic is intended to help people with mild to moderate clutter problems. When people have more serious problems, the mess in their homes may disrupt normal living. For example, they may be unable to use the stove for cooking or the bed for sleeping. Although they may find the extreme clutter distressing, people who hoard may be unaware that their behavior is not rational. They may become angry and defensive if they are criticized. Severe problems may require help from mental health professionals who specialize in working with people who hoard or clutter. Trained counselors can help people work through underlying issues that may have led to hoarding or cluttering.

Working with learners who live with a great deal of clutter can be very challenging, but reducing clutter can help improve their lives and make their homes healthier for themselves and their children.

This lesson is designed to help families to identify clutter, reduce their current clutter, and plan to prevent clutter from growing again. It's more realistic to aim for "good enough" than for perfection.

Planning note: This lesson asks the learner to collect and label four empty boxes to deal with clutter. If possible, provide the empty boxes (about the size that a case of paper comes in) and a marker so that the learner can label the boxes during your visit.

## Resources for trainers

### For children

Lex, Lester. 2011. *Clutter Cut, Inc.*

### For adults

Freedman, R., and Garber, M.D. 2000. *Helping Kids Get Organized: Activities That Teach Time Management, Clutter Clearing, Project Planning, and More.*

Frost, Randy O., and Steketee, Gail. 2010. *Stuff: Compulsive hoarding and the meaning of things.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. This book helps explain the psychology of hoarding and cluttering and the differences between those two conditions. It includes an excellent reference list.

International OCD Foundation Hoarding Center, <http://www.ocfoundation.org/hoarding> has a great deal of information about hoarding, including a fact sheet, tips for talking to people with hoarding issues, and information about self-help support groups ([http://www.ocfoundation.org/uploadedfiles/Hoarding/Help\\_for\\_Hoarding/Facilitator's%20Manual%20Final.pdf](http://www.ocfoundation.org/uploadedfiles/Hoarding/Help_for_Hoarding/Facilitator's%20Manual%20Final.pdf)).

National Study Group on Chronic Disorganization, [www.challengingdisorganization.org](http://www.challengingdisorganization.org)

Tolin, David F., Frost, Randy O., and Steketee, Gail. 2007. *Buried in treasures: Help for compulsive acquiring, saving and hoarding.* New York: Oxford University Press. This book provides a step-by-step plan for addressing compulsive hoarding. It contains self-tests and questionnaires.

Walsh, Peter. 2007. *It's all too much. An easy plan for living a richer life with less stuff.* New York: Free Press. This book helps people step back and look at all they have

accumulated. It is good for someone who wants to reduce their consumption and lead a richer life by having fewer possessions to clean, store, use, and care for. It helps people to think about how to best create and use space and save money.

Welch, Mary Ellen. 2009. *House smart: Solutions for managing clutter*. A guide for people who want to reduce clutter around the home. Storrs: University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System.

## Lesson Plan: Controlling Clutter

### Learning objectives

At the end of this topic, learners will be able to

- Recognize the importance of keeping a home free of too much clutter
- Identify clutter in their own homes
- Describe a process to reduce clutter
- Describe actions to prevent future clutter

### Materials you'll need for this lesson

- Copies of handouts
- Pens or pencils
- 4 sturdy, empty cardboard boxes for sorting clutter
- Marker to label boxes: Keep, Donate, Sell, Trash or Recycle

### For children's activities

- Child's safety scissors or regular scissors for adult
- Colored pencils, pens, crayons, or markers

Start with a review of the previous week's topic. See that topic for review suggestions.

### Introduce the new topic: clutter.

Ask:

What is clutter?

Give the learner a few moments to respond. Then offer the following explanation.

An item is clutter if it is

- Something that you don't need, want, or use
- Something that takes up space in your home—even a little space

Most people have at least some clutter, whether in a single junk drawer, a single room, or an entire house. If you have too much clutter, it's not only messy, it can interfere with how you and your children live. It can also create health problems for you and your children.

Ask.

What kinds of problems do you think clutter can cause?

Encourage the learner to suggest answers. Then explain the answers that many experts give, as listed below.

Clutter can interfere with your life.

- It takes up time that you could spend doing other things. For example, it may take you 15 minutes to find your house keys, so you don't have time to play with the baby before you leave for work.

- It may be expensive if you have to buy a second item because you can't find the one you already own.
- You may be reluctant to invite family and friends to your home because you're embarrassed by the clutter.
- You may feel stressed by all of the stuff piled up around you.

Clutter can create health problems.

- Clutter often accumulates dirt and dust, as well as allergens (substances like pet hair and pollen that can cause allergic reactions).
- Clutter may provide homes for pests, such as bugs and mice.
- Clutter can store moisture, creating mold and mildew problems

All of these problems can be especially serious for people with asthma.

- Clutter can also increase the risk of injuries from tripping, falling, or fires.

If a child in the family has been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), explain that clutter can make life more challenging for the child.

A cluttered home may make life more difficult for a child affected by attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), because it offers too much stimulation. A neat, simple environment may help such a child function better.

Introduce the activity. Distribute **Handout 1: Is your home cluttered?**

Do you think your home is cluttered? **Handout 1: Is your home cluttered?** will help you decide.

Answer the questions honestly. If your home is cluttered, this lesson will help you learn how to clear away some of the clutter.

After the learner has answered the questions, review them with the learner.

Ask the learner to imagine how her home would look if she got rid of the clutter

Please close your eyes and imagine how your home would look if you could get rid of the clutter. Imagine each room, each tabletop, and each counter.

- What would it look like?
- What would it feel like?
- What would it smell like?
- What words come to mind?

Suggested answers: clean, neat, peaceful, relaxing, smells good.

Ask specific questions to help the learner think more about a home free of clutter.

- How do you think you would feel if your home were free of clutter?
- How would it make your life easier?
- Imagine your friends and family visiting your clutter-free home. How would you feel?

Distribute **Handout 2: Overcoming obstacles to reducing clutter. Section A** considers benefits to reducing clutter.

Please look at **Handout 2, Section A**. Check off the benefits that are most important to you and your family. Add any other benefits that you can think of.

**Section B** considers obstacles to reducing clutter.

Sometimes it's hard to clear away clutter. Different people have different reasons. Sometimes they think they don't have enough time to do it all. Or they have no place to put away items.

What are the things that make clearing away clutter hardest for you? On **Handout 2, Section B**, check off the things that make it hard for you to clear away clutter.

Ask the learner whether she is interested in reducing the clutter in her home.

- Does the clutter bother you?
- Does the clutter interfere with your life?
- Would you like to make your home healthier?

Would you like to learn some simple ways to start clearing away clutter?

If the learner agrees, explain the four key steps to reducing clutter.

We're going to talk about four steps to control clutter:

1. Getting ready
2. Sorting
3. Taking action
4. Preventing future clutter

We'll explain the general process and then talk about what you can do specifically.

Distribute **Handout 3a: Controlling clutter: Getting ready**

The first step of controlling clutter is to prepare to take action. Handout 3a shows ways that help you get ready.

Start by talking to the other people who live in your home about why you want to reduce the clutter.

- Explain why controlling clutter is important to you. You might mention the benefits you identified in Handout 2, Section A.
- Ask for their cooperation in getting rid of clutter.
- Focus on positive efforts—both yours and theirs. Do not blame anyone for the clutter.

Next, pick one area to start.

- If a whole room seems too difficult, start with a smaller area—for example, the kitchen countertop next to the sink, or the coffee table in the living room.



- Set a specific goal for each area—for example, clearing the countertop of dirty dishes and food.
- Give yourself a deadline to accomplish each goal—for example, clearing the countertop of dirty dishes and food each night.

Note to trainer: If possible, provide the empty boxes and a marker so that the learner can label them now.

Next, get four empty boxes and label them. Use one box for each of the following categories:

- **Keep**
- **Donate**
- **Sell**
- **Trash or recycle**

Distribute **Handout 3b: Controlling clutter: Sorting**.

The second step of the process is to sort the clutter. Put the items into the boxes you have labeled.

To decide whether you should keep an item or get rid of it, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you need it?
- Do you use it?
- Do you love it?
- Is it worth the space it takes up?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then put the item in the **Keep** box.

- Keep items that you need, such as important papers, like a lease or a rent receipt.
- Keep items that you use, such as clothing that you wear, everyday dishes, pots and pans.
- Keep items that you love, that have emotional meaning to you, like family photos.
- Keep items that are worth the space they take up in your home.

If the answer to every question is *no*—you don't need it, use it, or love it, and it's not worth the space it takes up—then let it go. Put it in one of the other boxes.

- **Donate** items that someone else could use, such as outgrown children's clothing. You can donate to a charity, a family member, a friend, or a neighbor.
- **Sell** things that someone else would be willing to pay for, such as fancy dishes that you received as a gift but never use. Be realistic about the price you can expect for your items. Be prepared to get much less than you paid.
- **Trash or recycle** items that are of no use to you or anyone else, such as torn or stained clothing.

**Optional activity**

If the learner is willing, help her to sort a few items now. Ask her to consider the questions above as she sorts the items.

Try to find an example of each category. Encourage the learner to make a decision on each item that she considers, so that she doesn't handle the same item over and over. Keep in mind that some learners may find this activity difficult.

NOTE: Be aware that clutter can be the home for pests, such as cockroaches. Use caution if you would like to volunteer to take away some boxes of clutter in your own vehicle.

**Distribute Handout 3c: Controlling clutter: Taking action.**

The third step in the process of controlling clutter is to take action. Without this step, the boxes themselves simply become more clutter.

After you've sorted the items by putting them in the appropriate boxes, empty the boxes.

- Everything that you **keep** should have a home—whether in a drawer or closet, on a shelf, or somewhere else. Put all the “keep” items where they belong.
- Put the “**donate**” items in the car trunk or near the door so you can drop them off at the charity or other person who can use the item.
- Set aside an area for the “**sell**” items. Decide how to sell them: a personal or community tag sale, a newspaper ad, or online via eBay, or a local shopping website. Set a realistic price. Within two days, put up your ad. Within two weeks, if the items don't sell, reconsider whether to reduce the price or donate them. When selling items, always be very careful about allowing strangers into your home.
- Empty the **trash** box into the trashcan or recycling bin.

**Talk about toys.**

Toys can be a special clutter issue for families with young children. Of course you want your children to have toys to play with. But sometimes the number of toys gets out of control. You buy toys for your children; other people give them birthday and holiday gifts; and friends and relative pass on hand-me-down toys from older children. Pretty soon your kids are swimming in toys. Is that true in your home?

For many parents, this problem is very familiar. You can apply the same principles to your kids' toys that you apply to other items.

- Keep the toys that your children use or love.
  - Remember to give your children only toys that are appropriate for their ages. Don't give a young child something intended for an older child. Such toys might be dangerous for a young one (for example, they might contain small parts that a younger child could swallow).
  - If you have a lot of age-appropriate toys, put out only some of them at one time. Then, when your child gets bored with those toys, put away that selection for a while and pull out the ones that you've been storing.
- Donate usable toys that your children do not like or have outgrown.
- Sell any expensive toys that someone else could use.
- Throw away all toys that are broken, worn out, or missing important parts.

And here is an important piece of advice: Teach your children to put away their toys.

- Provide a place (such as a box or laundry basket) to store toys.
- Help your child pick up toys each day. That practice will help your child develop good habits to prevent future clutter.

Discuss how to prevent future clutter. Distribute **Handout 3d: Controlling clutter: Preventing future clutter**.

Once you have started to reduce the clutter in your home, you'll probably want to plan ways to prevent clutter from accumulating in the future. Here are some general guidelines for keeping clutter from accumulating.

- Every object needs a home, and every object needs to go to that home each day.
- Schedule time to handle clutter each week. A good time might be right before you take out the weekly trash.

Here are some specifics that can help you prevent future clutter.

- Everyone
  - Hang up coats and jackets as soon as you come indoors.
  - Put away hats, gloves, mittens, purses, wallets, keys, and pocket change.
  - Put dirty clothes into a hamper or laundry basket as soon as you take them off.
  - Take dirty dishes to the kitchen sink as soon as you finish eating.
- Adults
  - Buy only what you really need, so you won't have extra stuff to store.
  - Sort your mail as soon as possible.
    - Throw away junk mail immediately.
    - Set up a place to put bills and other important mail that requires you to do something.
      - When you've done whatever is necessary (for example, paid a bill), put away that paper in a safe place.
    - Set up another place for magazines and other less important mail.
  - Review kids' school papers each day.
    - Set up a place to put papers that require you to do something.
    - Clean up dishes, pots and pans, and kitchen counters at least once a day.
- Kids
  - Put away toys at the end of each day.
  - Put homework into backpacks as soon as it's completed, and put backpacks near the door.

Explain the homework to the learner. Distribute **Handout 4: My plan to control clutter**. Ask the learner to create a plan to control clutter. Encourage her to think about each room where clutter is a problem, and then set goals for the next three weeks. Offer to help her create this plan if she seems willing.

## Conclusion

Distribute **Handout 5: Tips for controlling clutter**, which summarizes this lesson.

Today we've talked a lot about clutter—about why it's a health problem, about how to reduce clutter, and about ways to prevent future clutter.

Do you think that you'll make any changes as a result of what we've talked about today?

**Note to trainer:** Please write down any changes that the learner plans to make on the Home Visitors Follow-Up Notes page. We would like to track the learner's plans to help measure the effectiveness of this training.

Explain how to teach children to control clutter.

You can start to teach your children to control clutter when they are young. If they develop this habit early, it can help them throughout life. Here are some suggestions:

- Make cleaning up a routine. Set aside a specific time each day to pick up toys, books, clothing, and other household items.
- Set up or help your child set up a place for everything. Provide bins, buckets, or shelves that your child can reach, so that he can easily put his things away.
- Help your child practice sorting and deciding where items belong. These tasks help your child learn how to organize.
- Talk with your child about how to organize. For example, ask, "How do you think you should arrange your stuffed animals?" Encourage her to think about various ways to organize—by size, color, importance to her, or other features.
- Encourage your child to decide which items he no longer wants or needs, and to give away or throw away unwanted items.
- Teach him to respect the spaces and belongings of all family members.
- Set a good example by cleaning up your own clutter.
- Show appreciation for her efforts.

Introduce the activity for children. Distribute **Handout 6: Clearing clutter: Games for kids**. Ask the learner to play one or more of the games with the child.

You can help your child learn how to clear away his or her clutter—toys, games, books, clothing, and so on. Teach your child where various items belong—in a toy box or basket, on a shelf, in a closet, in a dirty-clothes hamper, or in a trashcan.

The handout gives some suggestions for ways to make this activity fun for your child. See how much fun you and your child can have when you do this chore together.

### Evaluation

Please complete the **Home visitor's feedback and follow-up notes** after you have finished the lesson. You may wish to wait until your next visit to answer the follow-up questions about what changes the learner has made and what activities the learner has used with his or her children. Then return the form to the Family Services Coordinator.

### Review

After you have completed this topic, you may want to review it with the learner during your next home visit. Ask what the learner remembers.

During our last visit, we talked about clutter. Would you like to tell me what you remember about what we said?

See how much the learner recalls. You might remind the learner of the following information.

Clutter is something that you don't need, want, or use and that takes up space in your home.

Clutter can interfere with your life, by taking up time and money. It can make you feel stressed and reluctant to invite people to your home.

Clutter can create health problems, by accumulating dust, providing homes for pests, storing moisture, and increasing the risk of injuries.

We talked about clutter in your home and ways to control it. They include

1. Getting ready: setting up boxes of things to keep, donate, sell, or trash or recycle.
2. Sorting: keeping only the things that you need, use, or love and that are worth the space they take up.
3. Taking action: putting away the things you want to keep and by donating, selling, or trashing or recycling the things you don't want to keep.
4. Preventing future clutter.

Ask open-ended questions, such as the ones below. Make a note of any progress the learner has made or any questions the learner may have about this topic.

- How are you doing with controlling clutter?
- Do you have any questions about this topic?
- Have you had an opportunity to do any of the activities with your child? If so, how did those go?

## Handout 1 Is your home cluttered?

Please answer the questions below.	Yes	No
<b>Clothing</b>		
1. Is clean clothing usually lying around, not put away in drawers or closets?		
2. Is dirty clothing usually left lying around, on the floor or on the furniture?		
3. Are your closets stuffed with clothing that no one wears?		
<b>Papers</b>		
4. Are there usually big piles of unsorted mail, newspapers, magazines, ads, or other papers lying around, on counters or on furniture?		
5. Do you usually have trouble finding unpaid bills that you know are due?		
<b>Dishes and food</b>		
6. Are clean dishes usually lying around, not put away in cabinets or on shelves?		
7. Are dirty dishes, empty food containers, or used soda cans usually left piled in the sink, spread on a counter, or scattered elsewhere in your house for more than a few hours?		
8. Do you have foods that have expired? (Check the expiration dates.)		
<b>General</b>		
9. Do you have to step over or around clutter to move around in the house?		
10. Do any rooms have pathways because there is a lot of stuff on the floor?		
11. Are any doors or stairways blocked by clutter?		
12. Do you have to search for misplaced items several times each week?		
13. Do you sometimes have to buy a new item because you can't find one that you already own?		
14. Are you sometimes late for work, school, or appointments because you can't find an item you need?		
15. Do you often have trouble completing household tasks, such as doing laundry or cleaning house, because of clutter?		
16. Are all of your storage areas (such as closets, kitchen and bathroom cabinets, and drawers) completely full?		
17. Do you feel embarrassed to invite friends or family to visit because your house is messy?		
18. Do you ever argue with other members of the family about clutter?		

If you answered **yes** to any of these questions, your house may have too much clutter.

## Handout 2 Overcoming obstacles to reducing clutter

### Section A: Benefits of reducing clutter

Below are some of the benefits of reducing clutter in your home. Write down any other benefits you can think of. Check all the ones that are most important to you and your family.

Check all that are important to you	Benefits of reducing clutter
	Set a good example for my children.
	Reduce places where pests can live.
	Reduce dampness in house.
	Easier to find what I need by keeping things where they belong.
	Save time now wasted by searching for things.
	Feel more comfortable in my own home.
	Feel more comfortable about inviting people to visit my home.

### Section B: Obstacles to reducing clutter

Below are some of the common obstacles that prevent people from dealing with clutter. Write down any others that apply to you and your family. Check all the ones that apply to you. Then circle any solutions that you think would work for you, or write down your own solutions.

Check all that apply to you	Obstacle	Our possible solutions	Your possible solutions
	Not enough time	Don't try to do it all at once. Set aside 15 minutes each day to putting things where they belong.	
	Too much clutter—it's overwhelming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle one small area at a time. Start with a drawer, a section of a countertop, a closet shelf.</li> <li>• Once you've cleared that area, applaud your success, and try another small area.</li> </ul>	
	Family won't cooperate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell other adults why it's important to clear clutter.</li> <li>• Teach your children how to clean up after themselves—putting toys away, taking dirty dishes to the sink, putting dirty clothes in a hamper or laundry basket.</li> </ul>	

### Handout 3a      Controlling clutter: Preparing

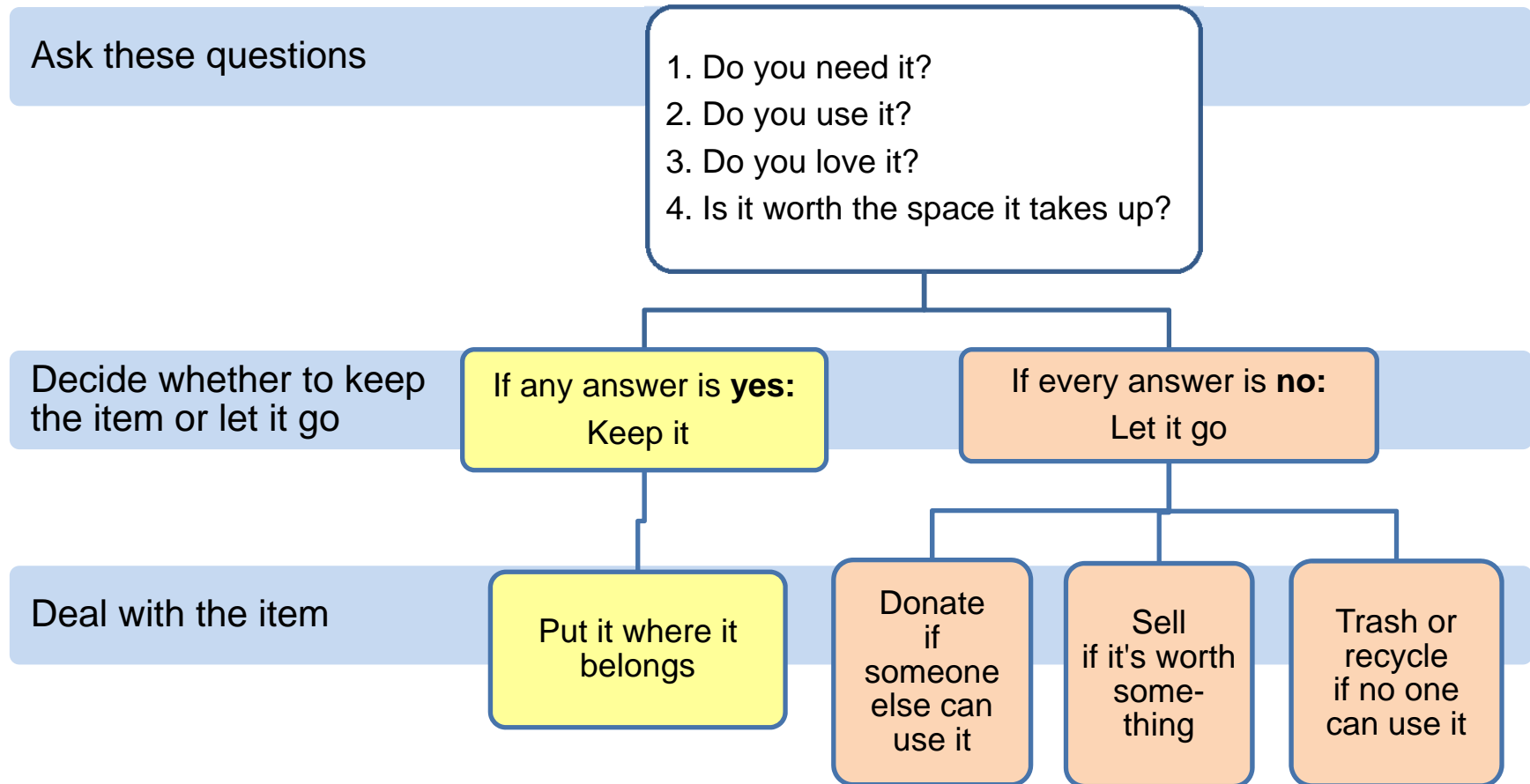
<p>Talk to other people in your home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain why controlling clutter is important to you.</li><li>• Ask for their cooperation in getting rid of clutter.</li><li>• Focus on positive efforts—both yours and theirs. Do not blame anyone for the clutter.</li></ul>
<p>Choose an area to start</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start with one room or even one area of a room (for example, the kitchen countertop near the sink, or a coffee table)</li><li>• Set a specific goal for each area—for example, clearing the countertop of dirty dishes and food.</li><li>• Give yourself a deadline to accomplish each goal—for example, clearing the countertop of dirty dishes and food each night</li></ul>
<p>Get 4 empty boxes and label them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep</li><li>• Donate</li><li>• Sell</li><li>• Trash</li></ul>



### Handout 3b: Controlling clutter: Sorting

Consider the items that are taking up space in your home. Ask yourself the four questions in the white box below.

- If you answer **yes** to any of the questions, keep the item. But don't leave it lying around as clutter. Find a safe place for it (such as a drawer, shelf, or closet), and put it away whenever you're done using it.
- If you answer **no** to all of these questions, then the item is clutter. It's time to let it go.



### Handout 3c Controlling clutter: Taking action

Box	Action: Empty all boxes	Put a check mark when the box is empty
<p><b>Keep</b> Keep items that you use, need (such as important documents), or love (items that have emotional meaning to you) and that are worth the space they take up.</p>	<p>Within 2 days Put items where they belong, such as on a shelf or in a drawer, closet, or storage container in the basement.</p>	
<p><b>Donate</b> Donate items that someone else could use, such as outgrown children’s clothing.</p>	<p>Within 2 weeks Take items to a charity or give to a family member, friend, or neighbor.</p>	
<p><b>Sell</b> Sell things that someone else would be willing to pay for, such as fancy dishes that you received as a gift but never use. Set realistic prices for your items: probably not the original price but what they are worth to someone else now.</p>	<p>Within 2 days Post an ad in a neighborhood newspaper, set up or join a group tag sale, or post on eBay. Within 2 weeks If the item hasn’t sold, consider lowering the price, donating it or putting it in the trash.</p>	
<p><b>Trash or recycle</b> Trash or recycle items that are of no use to you or anyone else, such as torn or stained clothing.</p>	<p>Within 1 week Put out with the week’s trash or recycling.</p>	

#### Toys

- **Keep** a reasonable number of toys that are right for your child’s age.
  - Teach your child to put away toys.
    - Provide a place (such as a box or laundry basket) to store toys.
    - Help your child pick up toys each day.
- **Donate or sell** toys that your child does not play with.
- **Throw away** toys that are broken, worn out, or missing pieces.



### Handout 3d                      Controlling clutter: Preventing future clutter

#### General rules

- Every object needs a home, and every object needs to go to that home each day.
- Schedule time to handle clutter each week. A good time might be right before you take out the weekly trash.

#### Everyone

- Put away outside stuff as soon as you come indoors.
  - Hang up coats and jackets.
  - Put away hats, gloves, mittens, purses, wallets, keys, and pocket change.
- Put dirty clothes into a hamper or laundry basket as soon as you take them off.
- Take dirty dishes to the kitchen sink as soon as you finish eating.

#### Adults

- Buy only what you really need, so you won't have extra stuff to store.
- Sort your mail as soon as possible.
  - Throw away junk mail immediately.
  - Set up a place to put bills and other important mail that requires you to do something.
  - When you've done whatever is necessary (for example, paid a bill), put away that paper in a safe place.
  - Set up another place for magazines and other less important mail.
- Review kids' school papers each day.
  - Set up a place to put papers that require you to do something.
- Clean up dishes, pots and pans, and kitchen counters at least once a day.

#### Kids

- Put away toys at the end of each day.
- Put homework into backpacks as soon as it's completed, and put backpacks near the door.

### Handout 4      My plan to control clutter

Your goal can be to reduce current clutter, to prevent future clutter, or both. Write a goal for each room where clutter is a problem in your home. It's OK to start small. Even if you just pick up one piece of clutter, you're making progress. The next time, you might pick up two or three pieces of clutter.

Put a check mark next to your goal when you have achieved it. Add more goals as you succeed in controlling your clutter.

Room	Goal for week 1		Goal for week 2		Goal for week 3	
		Done (✓)		Done (✓)		Done (✓)
Kitchen						
Bathroom						
Living room						
Bedroom 1						
Bedroom 2						
Bedroom 3						
Family room						

Room	Goal for week 1		Goal for week 2		Goal for week 3	
		Done (✓)		Done (✓)		Done (✓)
Dining room						
Garage						
Attic						
Basement						
Other places						

## Handout 5 Tips for controlling clutter

Clutter is something that you don't need, want, or use and that takes up space in your home.

Follow the four steps to controlling clutter:

### 1 Get ready

- Talk to other people in your home
- Choose an area to start
- Get 4 empty boxes and label them  
**Keep, Donate, Sell, and Trash**

### 2 Sort

- Choose the things you will keep: things that you need, use, or love and that are worth the space they take up
- Sort the things you will not keep: donate, sell, or trash

### 3 Take action

- **Put away** the items that you use, need, or love and that are worth the space they take up
- **Donate** items that someone else could use
- **Sell** items that someone else would be willing to pay for
- **Trash or recycle** items that are of no use to anyone



Keep: put away



Donate to charity



Sell



Trash or recycle

### 4 Prevent future clutter

- Buy only what you really need
- Sort mail every day
- Review kids' school papers every day
- Clean up kitchen every day

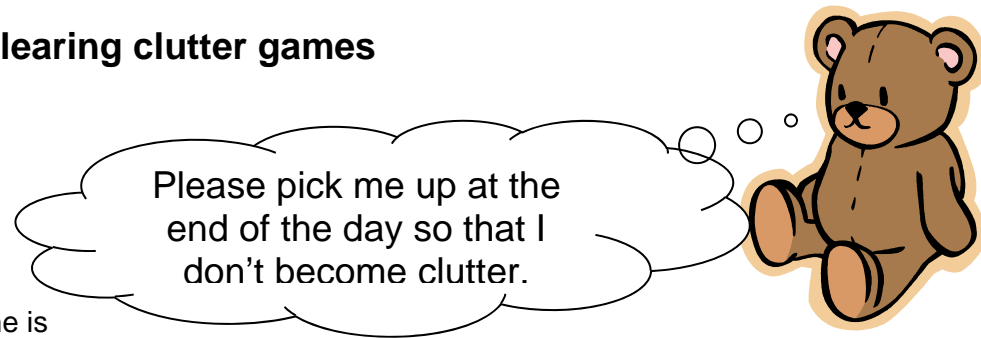
## Handout 6      Activity for children: Clearing clutter games

Teddy has a message for kids.

Help your child learn how to clear away his or her clutter—toys, games, books, clothing, and so on.

### Tips for teaching children to manage clutter

- Start to teach your child to control clutter when she is young. If she develops this habit early, it can help her throughout life.
- Make cleaning up a routine. Set aside a specific time each day to pick up toys, books, clothing, and other household items.
- Set up or help your child set up a place for everything. Provide bins, buckets, or shelves that your child can reach, so that he can easily put his things away.
- Teach your child where various items belong—in a toy box or basket, on a shelf, in a closet, in a dirty-clothes hamper, or in a trashcan.
- Help your child practice sorting and deciding where items belong. These tasks help your child learn how to organize.
- Talk with your child about how to organize. For example, ask, “How do you think you should arrange your stuffed animals?” Encourage her to think about various ways to organize—by size, color, importance to her, or other features.
- Encourage your child to decide which items he no longer wants or needs—like toys he has outgrown—and to get rid of unwanted items.
- Teach him to respect the spaces and belongings of all family members.
- Set a good example by cleaning up your own clutter.
- Show appreciation for her efforts.



You can turn this helpful activity into a game you play with your child. Here are some suggestions for making clean-up into a fun activity for your child:

Clutter games	You might say
<p><b>Clutter word game</b></p> <p>Teach your child the word “clutter.”</p> <p>Point to different items in the room (some that are clutter and some that are not).</p> <p>Ask the child whether that item is clutter.</p> <p>When the answer is yes, have the child call out “Clutter!” and then pick up the item and put it away.</p> <p>Play with the word “clutter” by asking your child some words that rhyme with “clutter”</p>	<p>The word ‘clutter’ means stuff that is left lying around, not put away where it belongs.</p> <p>Is that clutter?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did you say ‘butter’?</li><li>• Did you say ‘flutter’?</li><li>• Did you say ‘putter’?</li><li>• Did you say ‘mutter’?</li></ul>
<p><b>Name game 1</b></p> <p>Name or describe each item that needs to be put away.</p> <p>Then ask your child to find it and then decide where it belongs.</p>	<p>I see a big blue book. Where is it? Where does it belong?</p>



Clutter games	You might say
<p><b>Name game 2</b></p> <p>Ask your child to bring you each item before she puts it away, and give it a silly or rhyming name.</p> <p>Then ask the child for the correct name of the item before putting it away.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is that a green wall? No, it's a red ball.</li> <li>• Is that a big cook? No, it's a small book.</li> <li>• Is that a rotten pear? No, it's a teddy bear.</li> <li>• Is that a gray elephant? No, it's a white dog.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Clear clutter to music</b></p> <p>Play any lively music that your child enjoys while she puts away her stuff.</p> <p>Have your child dance as she clears away her stuff.</p>	<p>Teddy is calling you. He's tired and he wants to go to sleep in his toy box.</p>
<p><b>Pretend</b></p> <p>Pretend that each toy is calling your child, asking to be put away.</p>	<p>Please put him away.</p>
<p><b>Silly walks</b></p> <p>Have your child walk, skip, hop on his right foot, hop on his left foot, hop on both feet, or march as he puts away toys. Vary the actions to keep the game interesting.</p> <p>Add music if your child likes it.</p>	
<p><b>Counting game</b></p> <p>As your child puts away items, count them aloud. Have your child repeat the number after you.</p> <p>Or, if your child is able, have her do the counting.</p>	
<p><b>Beat the clock</b></p> <p>Count how many toys your child can pick up in two minutes. Then count how many he can pick up in the next two minutes.</p> <p>Or see how long it takes to pick up all the toys each day.</p> <p>Keep track of the time, and see if the job takes less time each day.</p>	

Clutter games	You might say
<p><b>Clutter basketball</b></p> <p>Have your child toss unbreakable toys (like stuffed animals) into a toy box or laundry basket from a short distance away. Let him get closer if he keeps missing.</p> <p>For slightly older children, keep score: Give the child one point for each item that gets into the basket.</p>	
<p><b>Simon says, “Pick up clutter”</b></p> <p>If your child doesn’t already know the Simon Says game, teach it.</p> <p>Here is the rule for this game: The child should do <b>only</b> actions that start with “Simon says.”</p> <p>Then play Simon Says to have the child pick up her clutter.</p>	<p>If I say, “Simon says, ‘Pick up the blocks,’” you must pick up the blocks.</p> <p>But if I say only, “Pick up the blocks,” you must <b>not</b> pick up the books. You have to wait until I say something that starts with “Simon says.”</p>
<p><b>Freeze</b></p> <p>Tell your child that you will be saying “Freeze” at some point when she is picking up her stuff. When you do so, she has to stop moving and freeze in place.</p> <p>Try to catch her in a funny but safe position (such as scratching her nose). She can’t move again until you tell her “OK.”</p>	

Feel free to invent your own clean-up games, based on other activities that your child enjoys.

When you play these games, encourage your child.

For each item the child puts away, give him or her a high-five or praise (“Good job”).

When all the clutter is cleared away, give your child a warm hug as a reward for a job well done.

## Home visitor’s feedback and follow-up notes

- Please fill in this form after you have completed the lesson and observed any follow-up activities. This training is a pilot program, and the course developers welcome your comments and suggestions on how to improve it.
- Please make a copy of this form, and give the copy to the Family Services Coordinator to forward to the developers. Please place the original in the child’s file.

Learner’s response to this lesson						
Did the learner find the topic	Please check the box that most closely applies					
	Interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boring
	Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to understand
	Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useless
Please summarize the learner’s plans to make changes as a result of this topic.						
Please identify any questions the learner had that were <b>not</b> covered in the topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please summarize any changes the learner actually made as a result of this topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please list the activities that the learner did with his or her child and any comments about those activities.						
Your feedback on this lesson						
What was the most useful part of this lesson?						
What was the least useful part of this lesson?						
Do you have any suggestions for improving this lesson? For example, was the lesson too long or too short, with too much information or not enough information?						
Additional comments						

Your name:

Date:

Topic: Clutter

## Healthy Homes/Healthy Kids

### Controlling Mold and Moisture<sup>1</sup>

#### Background information for trainers

Molds are small living things that are naturally found outdoors, where they help break down fallen leaves, trees, and dead plants. Mold growth is good outdoors, but mold growth is **not** good indoors. Mold can damage wood furniture, fabric, carpeting, walls, and ceilings. And exposure to mold may make breathing problems worse for some people.

Molds reproduce by releasing little particles called *spores*. Individual spores are too small to see with the naked eye, but a collection of spores may look like a colorful velvety or powdery mat. Mold spores are very light and can float in the air. When they land, they start to grow wherever they find food (mold can eat almost everything) and moisture.

Most healthy people will not have a problem if they are exposed to mold. However, breathing in mold spores may cause health problems in some people.

- In people who are allergic to mold, exposure can be associated with symptoms like those of hay fever. These symptoms may include runny nose, sneezing, coughing, or scratchy throat.
- In people who already have asthma, exposure to mold may trigger an asthma attack.
- In people with other breathing problems or those with weak immune systems (such as people with HIV or AIDS, those receiving chemotherapy, or those who have received organ transplants), exposure to mold may cause health problems.

#### Testing for mold

Health professionals do **not** recommend testing for mold in most situations because

- There are no standards for what is or is not an acceptable quantity of mold.
- Testing is expensive and rarely provides useful information.
- Do-it-yourself tests are not reliable.
- Testing does not change the fact that if mold is growing indoors, it needs to be cleaned up and the water source stopped.
- The clean-up procedures are the same for all types of mold.

#### A note about black mold

Some learners may have heard about black mold. There are actually many types of black molds. One type, called *Stachybotrys* (pronounced stack-ee-bot-tris), got a lot of media attention because it can sometimes release toxin (poison). However, not all types of *Stachybotrys* release toxin, and those that do may release it only some of the time, and in varying amounts. These toxins can be a problem if someone swallows them, but scientists think that they rarely become airborne and are therefore not usually breathed in. *Stachybotrys* likes to grow on very wet items that contain cellulose, such as wood and sheetrock. It does not grow on ceramic tile. Finding black mold usually tells us that the area has been wet for a long time.

It's important to know that learners should not panic if they find black mold.

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<sup>1</sup> This topic was coauthored by Joan Bothell, University of Connecticut, and Marian L. Heyman, MPH, Connecticut Department of Public Health.

**Here's the rule of thumb: if you can see or smell mold, it should be cleaned up.**

### **Cleaning up mold**

If you find mold, clean it up promptly. Since mold grows only where it can find moisture, you must find and eliminate the source of the moisture to prevent mold from growing back.

Most healthy people can clean up a small moldy area (less than 3 feet by 3 feet) themselves if they take proper precautions. However, **people who have asthma, severe allergies to mold, or weak immune systems should not clean up mold themselves.**

- If there is a lot of water damage or the area is larger, it may be better to hire a professional who has been trained in mold cleanup.
- If the damage was caused by sewage or other contaminated water, it is best to hire a professional who has been trained to handle these problems.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health's publication entitled "Get the Mold Out" can help someone decide whether to do the cleanup himself/herself or to hire a professional. It also has information about where to find professionals. All cleanup contractors should follow the department's "Connecticut Guidelines for Mold Abatement Contractors." Both documents can be found at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/mold>.

### **Mold, landlords, and tenants**

In rental properties, both landlords and tenants must do their part to keep the home clean, dry, and free of mold.

- Sometimes mold is a problem because residents have not been careful about keeping their homes clean and dry (for example, by controlling humidity through methods that are already available, such as using exhaust fans after showers).
- Sometimes mold is a problem because the property needs to be maintained more carefully—for example, leaks in pipes, windows, or roofs may need to be repaired. Tenants should ask the owner to make the necessary repairs. If the owner does not act within a reasonable time, tenants can call the local health department for help in working with the landlord to resolve the problem.

Note that because mold can damage the property, it's in the owner's best interest to control mold.

### **Resources for trainers**

#### **For children**

Dorros, A. 2005. *The Fungus That Ate My School*. Scholastic Bookshelf.

Knudsen, M. 2006. *A Moldy Mystery*. Science Solves It Series. Turtleback.

Harris, N. 2010. *In This Bathroom (What's Lurking in This House?)*. Heinemann-Raintree.

#### **For adults**

California Department of Public Health, *Mold in My Home: What Do I Do?*  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/IAQ/Pages/IndoorMold.aspx>

Spanish version: *Moho en mi casa: ¿qué hago?*

[http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/IAQ/Documents/MOHO\\_2006-06.pdf](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/IAQ/Documents/MOHO_2006-06.pdf)

Connecticut Department of Public Health,

Indoor Air Quality Testing Should Not Be the First Move, <http://www.ct.gov/dph/ieq>

Get the Mold Out: Mold Clean-Up Guidance for Residential Environments,

<http://www.ct.gov/dph/mold>

Connecticut Guidelines for Mold Abatement Contractors, <http://www.ct.gov/dph/mold>

National Center for Healthy Housing, *Creating a Healthy Home: A Field Guide for Clean-up of*

*Flooded Homes*. A guide for do-it-yourselfers and contractors.

[http://www.centerforhealthyhousing.org/Portals/0/Contents/FloodCleanupGuide\\_screen\\_.pdf](http://www.centerforhealthyhousing.org/Portals/0/Contents/FloodCleanupGuide_screen_.pdf)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home*, EPA

402-K-02-003, <http://www.epa.gov/mold/pdfs/moldguide.pdf>

Spanish version: *Una breve guía para el moho, la humedad y su hogar*,

[http://www.epa.gov/mold/pdfs/moldguide\\_sp.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/mold/pdfs/moldguide_sp.pdf)

-----. *Flood Cleanup and the Air in Your Home*. A simple, illustrated guide to cleaning up after flood damage, [http://www.epa.gov/iaq/flood/flood\\_booklet\\_en.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/flood/flood_booklet_en.pdf)

-----. Spanish version: *La limpieza después de la inundación y el aire en su hogar*

[http://www.epa.gov/iaq/flood/flood\\_booklet\\_sp.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/flood/flood_booklet_sp.pdf)

-----. *Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings*,

[http://www.epa.gov/mold/mold\\_remediation.html](http://www.epa.gov/mold/mold_remediation.html)

-----. Mold Web Course, <http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldcourse/moldcourse.pdf>

## Lesson Plan: Controlling Mold and Moisture

### Learning objectives

At the end of this topic, learners will be able to

- Recognize the importance of controlling mold and moisture
- List two health problems associated with exposure to mold
- Identify the most important thing that mold needs to grow
- Develop a plan to clean up existing mold in the home
- Develop a plan to reduce moisture in the home and prevent future mold growth

### Materials you'll need for this lesson

- Copies of handouts
- Pens or pencils

### For children's activities

- Handout 8:
  - Several clean, empty glass or clear plastic containers with lids. Use containers that can be thrown away after the experiment.
  - A marker to label the containers
  - Some small pieces of old bread, cheese, or fruit; pieces of cardboard; small rags; old washcloths; or similar items. Choose items that can be thrown away after the experiment.
  - Masking tape, duct tape, or other sticky tape to seal the containers closed

Start with a review of the previous week's topic. See that topic for review suggestions.

Introduce the new topic: controlling mold and moisture.

Today we're going to talk about molds. Molds are very tiny living things that are present almost everywhere, indoors and outdoors. Molds reproduce by releasing little particles called *spores*. Mold spores, which are too small to see, float in the air. When they land, they start to grow wherever they find food and moisture.

There are thousands of kinds of molds, and they come in many colors, including black, white, green, gray, and brown. Many people use the words *mold* and *mildew* interchangeably, but the word *mold* is more accurate.

Distribute **Handout 1a: What do you already know about mold?** Ask the learner to complete the true/false quiz.

After the learner has completed the quiz, distribute **Handout 1b: What do you already know about mold? Answer key.** Compare the learner's answers to the correct ones.

Explain how mold gets inside the home.

Some molds are useful. For example, certain molds make penicillin and other antibiotics. Other molds break down dead leaves outdoors. But when molds enter your home—through

open windows or doors, or attached to people and pets—they can create problems if they start to grow indoors.

#### Explain the problems associated with mold.

Most people think that molds are ugly and smell nasty. But more important, actively growing mold can destroy your belongings.

And although most healthy people are not affected by exposure to mold, some people with certain diseases—like asthma, other breathing problems, severe allergies to mold, and cancer--may be harmed by exposure to mold.

#### Explain the health problems associated with mold.

Because mold is everywhere, you and your family are exposed to it every day, usually without harm. You breathe in mold spores all the time. However, some people may be more sensitive than others. In these people, exposure to mold may trigger certain symptoms (like an asthma attack).

The reaction to mold varies from person to person. Mold may trigger health problems in one person but not in another. The people most likely to be affected are

- Babies and young children
- People with certain breathing problems, like asthma
- People who are allergic to mold
- People who have weak immune systems (such as people who have HIV or AIDS, who are receiving chemotherapy, or who have received organ transplants)

Some of the health problems associated with mold are:

- Sneezing
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Scratchy throat
- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Asthma symptoms in some people
- A certain type of lung inflammation in some people

#### Explain where we usually find mold.

We often find mold in

- Damp basements and closets
- Bathrooms
- Shower curtains
- Food storage areas
- Refrigerators
- Garbage containers
- Air conditioners and humidifiers
- Damp papers (such as newspapers and cardboard)

#### Ask.



What do you think these places have in common?

Answer.

They're often wet or damp.

Ask the learner to name ways that moisture might get into a home. Answers may include some or all of the following. Tell the learner any that he or she does not mention.

Moisture has many ways to get into a home:

- Damp basements or crawl spaces
- Cracks in the foundation
- Holes where utility lines come in
- Broken pipes
- Clothes dryer that vents indoors
- Wet clothes drying indoors
- Steam from showers or cooking
- Humidifiers
- Leaks in a roof, wall, or window
- Overflow of sinks or sewers
- Rain
- Flooding

Explain what molds need to live.

Molds must have food and water to survive.

Molds are not fussy about food. They eat just about everything, including paper, glue, fabric, leather, leaves, and wood. They can grow on carpeting, mattresses, upholstered furniture, clothing, and other materials. Mold can grow in obvious places (for example, on a bathroom wall) or hidden behind walls and underneath appliances.

Because molds can eat so many things that we have in our homes, it's almost impossible to eliminate all of their food sources. But we can reduce the moisture that mold needs to survive.

Ask.

Do you think you have a mold and moisture problem in your home?

Answer.

Everyone has some mold spores in the home. It's impossible to keep them all out.

Having some mold spores doesn't mean that you're a bad housekeeper. But if you have mold growing, you probably have too much moisture.

Explain how to know if a home contains mold.

You may suspect mold if

- You see discolored, speckled, velvety, powdery, or cottony patches on walls, ceilings, furniture, carpeting, or clothing.
- You smell a musty or earthy odor.
  - If you smell mold but don't see it, mold may be hidden behind wallpaper or paint, or inside walls.
- You see signs of past or ongoing water damage or leaks.

It's usually not necessary to test to know whether you have mold or what kind of mold you have. **If you can see or smell mold, it should be cleaned up.**

It doesn't matter what type of mold it is. The actions you need to take are the same for all types of mold: get rid of the mold and fix the source of moisture.

Introduce the activity. **Distribute Handout 2: Check your home for mold and moisture.** Give the learner the option of checking for mold and moisture during your visit or afterward, as homework. If the learner will check later, briefly review the checklist now.

**NOTE:** If the learner or you have asthma or another medical problem that mold might make worse, do not participate in the mold check.

**Handout 2: Check your home for mold and moisture** gives you a checklist of places to look for mold and moisture. In a few minutes we'll talk about what to do if you find it.

After completing the checklist, the learner should consider what she has found.

If the learner rents and has a serious mold problem, especially if it comes from things that a tenant cannot usually repair—such as a leaking pipe, window, or roof, or a flooded basement—suggest talking with the landlord. Below are some suggestions about ways of talking to the landlord.

Explain to the landlord that the mold and moisture can cause both damage to the property itself and health problems for the residents. For example, the landlord should be willing to repair leaking pipes, windows, or roofs. He or she might also be willing to install an exhaust fan in a bathroom, especially if there is no window in the room.<sup>2</sup> (By the way, make sure that bathroom fans vent to the outside, not into the attic.)

If the landlord is unwilling to make repairs, you can ask your local health department or housing code enforcement agency for help in working with the owner.

Assuming the learner has found some mold, explain when to clean it up. Distribute **Handout 3: Cleaning up mold.**

Notice that the handout talks about areas that are smaller or larger than 10 square feet. You may need to illustrate this size for the learner. You can do so by using a yardstick (to show a square about 3 feet long by 3 feet high) or by approximating this area by spreading your arms about 1 foot on each side of your shoulders and making a square. The measurement does not have to be precise.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about working with landlords, see the topic "Advocating for a Healthy Home."

**Handout 3: Cleaning up mold** has a reminder about the rule of thumb: If you can see or smell mold, clean it up.

Clean it up as soon as possible. The longer the mold grows, the bigger the problem becomes. It is much easier to clean up a small area than a large one.

Explain how to know whether to tackle the problem or seek professional help.

Most healthy people can handle a small mold cleanup project on their own. For example, if you have a few little spots of mold on your bathroom ceiling (as many people do), you can probably clean it yourself. But there are times when it's not a good idea to tackle mold yourself. Consider hiring a professional who has been trained in safe mold cleanup if

- You have asthma or other breathing problems, severe allergy to mold, or a weak immune system
- The moldy area is larger than 3 feet by 3 feet
- The water damage came from sewage or contaminated flood water
- The mold is hidden—for example, behind walls or above ceilings

Explain how to handle items that soak up water (porous items). Distribute **Handout 4: Handling items that soak up water**. Review the guidelines with the learner. Emphasize that if the learner is in doubt, it's safer to throw out the item.

If you're planning to handle a mold problem yourself, you may need to decide how to handle various items. There are different guidelines for items that soak up water and for items that don't soak up water.

**Handout 4: Handling items that soak up water** offers some guidelines for items in the first group.

Explain how to handle items that do not soak up water (nonporous items). Distribute **Handout 5: Handling items that don't soak up water**. Review the guidelines with the learner. Remind the learner that people with asthma or other breathing problems, severe allergies to mold, or weak immune systems should not clean up mold themselves.

Note: The key to cleaning mold is scrubbing it off. Most of the time, scrubbing with soap and water, detergent and water, or a commercial product made to kill mold solves the problem. After people finish scrubbing, some individuals may wish to wash again with a weak bleach solution (1 part bleach plus 9 parts water). If you think your learner may use bleach, review the safety warnings about bleach.

**Handout 5: Handling items that don't soak up water** covers surfaces like tile walls and vinyl floors.

Explain how to prevent future mold growth. Distribute **Handout 6: My plan to prevent mold in the future**. Review the guidelines with the learner.

After you have cleaned up any existing mold, you'll want to prevent the problem from returning. The way to do so is to control the moisture in your home.

Here are some signs that you may have a moisture problem:

- You see water stains on ceilings, walls, or floors.
- These surfaces feel damp.
- You see condensation.

Condensation happens when moisture in warm air touches a cold surface. For example, you'll often see water droplets on windows in the winter. The droplets come from moisture in the warm inside air touching cold windows. It's normal to have some condensation some of the time—such as when you're cooking a big meal. But if you have condensation on your windows most of the time, you may have a problem. Maybe your windows need to be repaired or replaced, or maybe you need more insulation in the walls or around the windows, or both. If you see condensation on windows, walls, pipes, or other surfaces, dry the surfaces immediately.

Whenever you notice a moisture problem, you need to find the source of the problem and have it fixed as soon as possible.

**Handout 6: My plan to prevent mold in the future** suggests some actions that you can take to reduce the moisture in your home. Please check off whether you already take these actions, plan to take them, or do not plan to take them.

#### Conclusion

Distribute **Handout 7: Tips for controlling mold and moisture**, which summarizes the lesson.

Today we talked about mold and moisture.

Mold may not bother most healthy people, but it can increase the risk of health problems for people with asthma or other breathing problems, severe allergies to mold, or weak immune systems.

Molds can eat just about everything, so it's impossible to get rid of all their food sources. But molds also need water to live, so we can control mold growth by controlling moisture in our homes.

It's important to check your home for mold, especially in places where there is often a lot of moisture, such as bathrooms, kitchens, and basements.

#### Ask.

Do you remember the rule of thumb about cleaning up mold?

#### Correct answer.

The rule of thumb is this: If you can see or smell mold, clean it up. Then find the source of water and fix it.

#### Continue the summary.

We talked about the recommended ways to clean up molds on various items and various surfaces.

- Most healthy people can clean up small moldy areas themselves.

- Because mold may be harmful to people with asthma or other breathing problems, severe mold allergies, or weak immune systems, we suggested that these people do **not** clean up mold themselves.

Finally, we talked about ways to prevent mold in the future—mainly by controlling moisture in your home.

Please make a note of any changes that the learner plans to make.

Do you think that you'll make any changes as a result of what we've talked about today?

Explain the homework to the learner. The homework will be one of the following, depending on the learner's situation:

- To check the home for mold and moisture (if the learner has not already done so)
- To clean up any mold that the learner has found
- To take action, as outlined in "My plan to prevent mold in the future"

Introduce the first activity for children. Distribute **Handout 8: Tell a grownup about mold song**. If the learner is not familiar with the tune ("If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands"), sing it for him or her.

Here is an activity that you can use to teach your child to tell an adult if he or she sees or smells mold somewhere.

Note to trainer: Introduce the second activity **only if you feel that the family can conduct it safely**—by keeping everyone from opening the containers in which mold may be growing. If so, distribute **Handout 9: How does mold grow?**

**Handout 9: How does mold grow?** describes an experiment that you and your child can do together.

### Evaluation

Please complete the **Home visitor's feedback and follow-up notes** after you have finished the lesson. You may wish to wait until your next visit to answer the follow-up questions about what changes the learner has made and what activities the learner has used with his or her children. Then return the form to the Family Services Coordinator.

### Review

After you have completed this topic, you may want to review it with the learner during your next home visit. Ask what the learner remembers.

During our last visit, we talked about controlling mold and moisture. Would you like to tell me what you remember about what we said?

See how much the learner recalls. You might remind the learner of the following information.

- Mold is everywhere, but it should not be growing inside your home.
- Most healthy people are not affected by exposure to mold. However, mold may cause health problems for people with asthma and other breathing problems, with severe mold allergies, and with weak immune systems (like cancer or transplant patients).

- It is usually not necessary to test for mold. If you can see or smell mold, it must be cleaned up.
  - Most healthy people can handle cleanup themselves if the moldy area is small, the water damage is from clean water (like rain), and they can see the mold. However, people with asthma or other breathing problems, severe mold allergies, or weak immune systems should not clean up mold themselves.
  - If the moldy area is large, the damage is from sewage or contaminated water, or the mold is hidden, it's a good idea to hire a professional who has been trained in safe mold cleanup.
- The way to control mold growth is to control moisture. It's important to check your home regularly for mold and moisture, especially in places that are often damp, such as bathrooms, kitchens, and basements.
- We also talked about the recommended ways to handle mold on items that absorb water and on items that don't absorb water.
- Finally, we talked about ways to prevent mold in the future—mainly by controlling moisture in your home.

Ask open-ended questions, such as the ones below. Make a note of any progress the learner has made or any questions the learner may have about this topic.

How are you doing with controlling mold and moisture in your home?

Do you have any questions about this topic?

Have you had an opportunity to do any of the activities with your child? If so, how did those go?

## Handout 1a                      What do you already know about mold?

Check off the appropriate boxes to show whether the statements below are true or false.

	True	False
1. Mold is ugly but harmless.		
2. Mold is always black and slimy.		
3. Mold can make some people sick.		
4. Mold can trigger asthma attacks.		
5. If I see mold but don't smell it, it's not a problem.		
6. Mold will go away by itself.		
7. Mold is a problem only in the bathroom or kitchen.		
8. Mold can damage the items it grows on.		
9. Mold cannot grow on paper.		
10. To control mold, I need to control the moisture in my home.		

**Handout 1b      What do you already know about mold? Answer key**






	True	False
1. Mold is ugly but harmless.		X
2. Mold is always black and slimy.		X
3. Mold can make some people sick.	X	
4. Mold can trigger asthma attacks.	X	
5. If I see mold but don't smell it, it's not a problem.		X
6. Mold will go away by itself.		X
7. Mold is a problem only in the bathroom or kitchen.		X
8. Mold can damage the items it grows on.	X	
9. Mold cannot grow on paper.		X
10. To control mold, I need to control the moisture in my home.	X	



## Handout 2 Check your home for mold and moisture

Think about the different spaces in your home. Where are the moist (damp) places? Where have you had leaks? Those are the places where you're most likely to find mold.

Here are some likely places to check. Use your eyes and your nose to check! If you find mold, clean it up and try to solve the moisture problem to keep mold from coming back.

Room	I checked for mold 	I found no mold 	I found mold 	I cleaned up mold 	I solved the moisture problem 
<b>Basement</b> Check around the walls and floors, pipes, ceiling, sink, carpeting, closets, stored items (boxes, clothing), water heater. Look for cracks or holes where water might enter. If there is a sump pump, make sure the pit is covered.					
<b>Bathroom</b> Check under and around the sink, around the toilet, around the bathtub or shower, shower curtain, ceiling, floor, around windows, air conditioners.					
<b>Bedrooms</b> Check around windows, ceiling, baseboards, walls, inside closets, air conditioners.					
<b>Dining room</b> Check walls, windows, air conditioners, anywhere there may have been leaks.					
<b>Entryways</b> Check around doors, floors, windows.					
<b>Kitchen</b> Check under and around the sink, under the refrigerator, around the stove, ceiling, around windows.					
<b>Laundry area</b> Check around the washing machine and dryer, around the dryer vent, sink. Make sure the dryer vents to the outside.					
<b>Living room</b> Check walls, windows, air conditioners, anywhere there may have been leaks.					
<b>Other</b>					

## Handout 3      Cleaning up mold

### Should you clean it up?

If you can see or smell it, clean it up.

### When should you clean it?

As soon as you find it.

The longer mold grows, the harder it is to clean, and the more damage it may cause.

### Who should clean up?

#### Consider doing it yourself if



- You don't have asthma or other breathing problems, severe mold allergies, or a weak immune system
- The moldy area is smaller than 10 square feet (about 3 feet by 3 feet)
- The damage was caused by clean water (like rain)
- The mold is on a surface where you can see it

#### Consider hiring a professional who is trained in safe mold cleanup<sup>3</sup> if



- You have asthma or other breathing problems, severe mold allergies, or a weak immune system
- The moldy area is larger than 10 square feet (about 3 feet by 3 feet)
- The damage was caused by sewage or other contaminated water
- The mold is hidden—for example, if you smell it but don't see it, it may be behind walls or above ceilings

<sup>3</sup> Professionals who clean up mold should follow the *Connecticut Guidelines for Mold Abatement Contractors*, [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/environmental\\_health/eoha/pdf/CT\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Mold\\_Remediation\\_Contractors\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/environmental_health/eoha/pdf/CT_Guidelines_for_Mold_Remediation_Contractors_Final.pdf).

## Handout 4 Handling items that soak up water: Clean it or toss it?

If some of your belongings—like a sofa or a stuffed chair, carpet, mattress, or even stuffed toys—have soaked up water and have stayed wet for a while, you'll probably have to throw them away.

### You may be able to save the items if

- You can dry them completely **within** 24 hours (warm weather) to 48 hours (cold weather) *and*
- You don't see or smell any mold.

If the item is small enough to put in a washer and dryer (like a jacket or a teddy bear left out in the rain overnight):

- Wash the item with hot water and regular laundry detergent or soap.
- Then dry it in a hot dryer (air-drying won't dry a thick item fast enough).
- Make sure that the item is completely dry.
- But if the item smells moldy after washing and drying, or if it starts to smell moldy in a few days, you should throw it away.

If the item is too large for a washer and dryer (like carpet, upholstered furniture, or a mattress that was next to a leaking window):

- Soak up as much water as possible with towels or a wet/dry vacuum cleaner.
- Dry the items completely **as fast as possible**.
- Get fresh, dry air moving around the items.
  - Open your windows, or turn on your air conditioner or your heat.
  - Put a fan in the window, and turn the fan so that it sucks moist air **out** of the house.
- Make sure that the item is completely dry.
- As above, if the item smells moldy after you've dried it, or if it starts to smell moldy in a few days, you should throw it away.

**Keep in mind: If in doubt, throw it out.**

**You'll probably have to throw out** any items that have been wet for **more than** 24 hours (warm weather) to 48 hours (cold weather). By then, mold is already growing, even if you can't yet see or smell it.

- If you rent, check with the landlord before you remove items like carpeting or furniture that belong to the landlord.
- Wrap the items in plastic bags and seal the bags, to avoid spreading mold around the rest of your home
- Remove the items from your home as soon as possible. Put them in the trash outside.

If you have any questions, call your local health department.

Note: If building materials, such sheetrock or plaster walls and ceilings, absorb water, they usually have to be removed and replaced. Even if the surface feels dry, mold could be growing inside the walls or above the ceilings.

## Handout 5 Handling items that don't soak up water<sup>4</sup>

### Keep in mind

People with asthma or other breathing problems, severe mold allergies, or weak immune systems should not clean up mold themselves

### How to clean surfaces that don't absorb water

Such as vinyl or linoleum floors, tile walls, fiberglass showers, metal, glass, and plastic

1. Collect the supplies you'll need.

	Long rubber gloves (like dishwashing gloves)	To protect your hands and arms
	Household soap, detergent, or commercial mold and mildew remover	Don't start with bleach.
	Two buckets	One for a mixture of detergent and water One for clean rinse water
	Rags, sponges, or paper towels	For scrubbing and drying
<p>Remember that areas larger than 10 square feet need special precautions and are probably best handled by trained professionals. But if you are cleaning an area that is almost 10 square feet, you may also need</p>		
	Goggles without holes or air vents	To keep mold and spores out of your eyes
	Mask labeled <b>N95</b> (not a plain dust mask)	To keep you from breathing mold and mold spores  These inexpensive facemasks (also called <i>respirators</i> ) are available at many hardware and home-improvement stores.

<sup>4</sup> The photos of the goggles and the N95 mask are courtesy of Marian L. Heyman, MPH, Connecticut Department of Public Health.

2. Set up the area.

Clear the area where you'll be working	Make sure that all babies, children, elderly folks, people with asthma or other breathing problems, severe mold allergies, or weak immune systems and pets are safely out of the room.
Contain the area to keep mold from spreading	For example, close the door, or put up a heavy-duty plastic sheet, taped to the floor and ceiling, to separate the room from the rest of your home.
Bring in fresh air	If possible, open windows and turn on an exhaust fan (but only if the fan vents outdoors). Or put a box fan in an open window. Turn the fan so that it <b>blows to the outdoors</b> .
	Don't blow air from the moldy area into clean rooms because that will just spread mold.

3. Dress for mold.

Wear old clothes	Wear clothes that you can wash in very hot water or throw away after the cleanup.
Protect your hands	Long rubber gloves
Remember: If you are cleaning an area that is almost 10 square feet, you may also need to put on protective gear	
	N95 face mask (follow the instructions on the package to make sure it fits properly)
	Goggles

4. Wash, rinse, and dry.

Use moist rags or sponges to scrub with the detergent and water mixture until the area looks and smells clean.
Scrub gently to avoid putting mold and mold spores into the air. Scrubbing is the key to getting rid of mold. Don't put the dirty rags or sponges on any clean surface.
Rinse with a clean rag or sponge and clean water.
Dry the area with additional clean rags or paper towels.



5. Clean up.

Before you leave the area, put the dirty rags, sponges, paper towels, and old clothes into a plastic bag and seal it.
Throw all of these things in the trash.

6. Check the area again every few days.

If a little mold returns, repeat the cleaning process.

If mold keeps returning, try to reduce the moisture in the area.

**NOTE:** Do not dry dust, brush, or vacuum mold with a regular vacuum cleaner. Doing so will spread mold spores.

### How to know if the job is done

- You won't see or smell any mold.
- All moldy items have been removed.
- Water and moisture problems have been solved.

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### Warnings about bleach and commercial mold and mildew products

#### **Bleach**

Most experts no longer recommend using bleach as the first step to remove mold and mildew. Bleach is poisonous if someone swallows it, and the fumes can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat. Spilled bleach can irritate the skin and damage clothing, shoes, furniture, and carpets. It's very important to keep bleach out of reach of children and pets.

You should always clean with soap and water or detergent and water first. Afterwards, if you want to kill any remaining germs, you'll need only a mild mixture of bleach and water or a commercial mold product. It might help you remember to clean before you bleach if you think about how most washing machines work. First, they wash your clothes in detergent (or soap) mixed with water to get out most of the dirt. Then they add bleach mixed with water.

You don't have to use bleach to get rid of mold, but if you decide to use it,

- Open windows and doors to provide fresh air.
- Wear dishwashing gloves and eye protection.
- **Dilute the bleach before you use it.** Use 1 part bleach plus 9 parts water. For example,
  - Use 1 cup of bleach plus 9 cups of water for big areas.
  - Use 1 tablespoon of bleach plus 9 tablespoons of water for very small areas.
- Do not spray the bleach and water mixture. Instead, pour it onto the rag, sponge, or area to be cleaned.
- Keep the bleach on the cleaned surface for at least 10 minutes. Then rinse and dry the material.
- Store the bleach safely out of reach of children and pets.

**Never mix bleach** with other household cleaning products, especially those that contain ammonia or vinegar, because these combinations may produce poisonous fumes.



**Store-bought mold and mildew removers**

A mold and mildew remover usually comes as a liquid in a spray container. It's safer to wipe on these products, rather than spray them, so that you don't breathe in the product.

If you have a spray or pump bottle, take off the top and moisten a rag or sponge with the product. Then scrub with the rag or sponge. Throw away the rag or sponge when you are finished.

Before you use these products, read the labels carefully. Follow all directions to use these products safely.

The chemicals in mold and mildew removers can be very harmful to humans and objects. Mold and mildew removers may cause breathing problems and, if swallowed, they may burn the person's throat. As with bleach, it's very important to keep these products out of reach of children and pets.

If you use mold and mildew removers

- Follow all precautions on the product label.
- Store the products safely out of reach of children and pets.



## Handout 6 My plan to prevent mold in the future

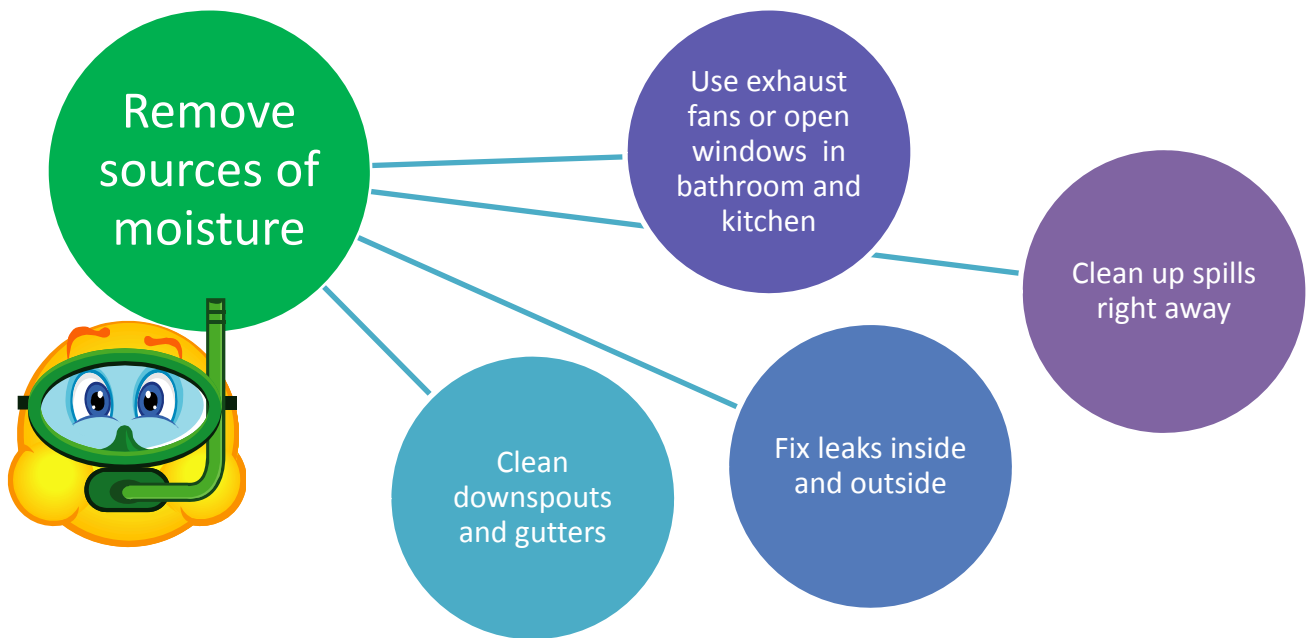
Mold needs moisture to grow. If you control moisture in your home, you'll help prevent the growth of mold. Below are some suggestions for ways to prevent mold in the future. Put a check mark next to each action you already take and each action you plan to take..

Actions I can take	I do this now	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this
Throughout your home			
1. Clean up existing mold to keep spores from spreading.			
2. Check for water leaks and repair (or ask the landlord to repair) promptly.			
3. Clean up water spills promptly.			
4. Get rid of clutter that can hold moisture.			
5. Don't bring moldy items (such as clothing, furniture, and books) into your home.			
6. Keep only a small number of potted plants in your home.			
7. Keep your home as clean as possible, to prevent mold from finding food.			
8. If you have a fish tank, cover it.			
9. Use a dehumidifier if you have one. Remember to empty and clean the pan frequently.			
10. Clean the drip pan on your air conditioner at least once a season.			
In your bathroom			
11. If the bathroom fan exhausts outdoors, turn it on during showers. Keep it running for 10-15 minutes after you finish your shower.			
12. If your bathroom doesn't have an exhaust fan, open an outside window for a few minutes during and after showers to let out the excess moisture.			
13. If you don't have an outside window, run a floor fan for 10-15 minutes after showers. Be very careful not to put the fan in a wet spot.			
14. Keep surfaces that get wet, such as walls around your bathtub and shower, clean and dry.			
15. Wipe down the shower stall or tub with an old towel, washcloth, or squeegee after <b>every use</b> . Wring out the towel or washcloth and hang to dry.			
In your kitchen			
16. If the fan over your stove exhausts outdoors, use the fan when you cook and wash dishes.			
17. Put lids on pots when you cook.			



Actions I can take	I do this now	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this
18. Clean the drip pan under the refrigerator.			
In your laundry area, basement, or attic			
19. Let damp items dry before you put them in the laundry hamper.			
20. Make sure that your clothes dryer vents outdoors (not into the attic).			
21. Whenever possible, hang wet laundry outdoors to dry or use the clothes dryer. Try not to hang wet laundry indoors to dry.			
22. Make sure that all laundry is completely dry before you put it away.			
23. If you store items in your basement or attic, put them in plastic bags or containers. Don't use cardboard boxes.			
24. If you have a sump pump in your basement, make sure that the pit is covered and that the pump is working.			
Outdoors			
25. Store firewood away from your home, not against the side of the house or in the garage.			
26. Clear gutters regularly so water doesn't overflow next to your home.			
27. Clear leaves away from window wells and drains.			

## Handout 7 Tips for controlling mold and moisture



## Handout 8      **Activity for children: Tell a grownup about mold song** (Sing to the tune of "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.")

### Instructions for adults

Tell your child not to touch or sniff anything that might be mold. Explain that mold is usually found in damp or moist areas (such as a bathroom). It may be almost any color. Sometimes it looks fuzzy, furry, cottony, or rough. Mold has a musty or nasty smell.

If your child sees something that might be mold, he or she should tell you or another adult in your home. An adult should clean up the mold as soon as possible. This song tells children not to touch mold because cleaning up mold is not a job for children.

To remind your child of this message, you can sing this song. Sing it to the tune of "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands." Instead of "someone," you can substitute "your Mom," "your Dad," "Grandma," "Grandpa," or any other adult who can safely clean up mold.

If you see some mold, don't touch it; tell someone.  
If you see some mold, don't touch it; tell someone.  
If you see some mold, don't touch it; tell a grownup who can judge it,  
If you see some mold, don't touch it; tell someone.

If it's moldy and it's smelly, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's smelly, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's smelly, then you know it isn't jelly,  
If it's moldy and it's smelly, tell someone.

If it's moldy and it's awful, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's awful, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's awful, then you know it's not a waffle,  
If it's moldy and it's awful, tell someone.

If it's moldy and it's gross, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's gross, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's gross, then don't even let it close.  
If it's moldy and it's gross, tell someone.

If it's moldy and it's yucky, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's yucky, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's yucky, then it really isn't lucky,  
If it's moldy and it's yucky, tell someone.

If it's moldy and it's stinky, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's stinky, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's stinky, then keep it off your pinky.  
If it's moldy and it's stinky, tell someone.

If it's moldy and it's furry, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's furry, tell someone.  
If it's moldy and it's furry, then you really ought to hurry,  
If it's moldy and it's furry, tell someone.



You and your child  
can make up more  
verses if you like.

## Handout 9      Activity for children: How does mold grow?

### Instructions for adults

You can do a science experiment to teach your child how mold grows.

### You'll need

- Some clean, empty glass or clear plastic containers with lids
  - Choose containers that you can throw away after the experiment.
- A marker to label the containers
- Some small pieces of old bread, cheese, or fruit; pieces of cardboard; small rags; old washcloths; or similar items
  - Again, choose items that you can throw away after the experiment.
- Masking tape, duct tape, or other sticky tape to seal the containers closed

### Directions

1. Explain to your child that molds are living things that grow on damp objects and on old food. Your child is going to become a mold scientist.
2. Label several containers with your child's name
  - Number each container.
  - Write on each container: **Mold Experiment: Do Not Open!**
  - Label some of the containers "Damp" and others "Dry."
3. Dampen some of the items, and leave others dry. Have your child put the damp items in containers labeled "Damp" and the dry items in containers labeled "Dry."
  - On the following page, write down what your child puts in each container and whether it is damp or dry.
4. Have your child tape the containers closed so that no air gets inside them.
  - Make sure that your child and everyone else in the home understand that they must not open the containers.
5. Ask your child to predict
  - Which containers will grow mold soonest?
  - Which containers will grow the most mold?
6. If possible, have your child put some containers in the refrigerator or freezer, some in a shady spot, and some in sunlight.
  - Be sure to label the containers so that no one else in the home opens them by mistake.
  - On the following page, check off where the container is being kept.
7. Each day, ask your child to look at the containers.
  - When does mold start to grow?
  - Which containers grow mold soonest?
  - Which containers grow the most mold?
  - Does all the mold look the same? Are there different colors?

Jenna  
#1  
**Mold Experiment**  
**Do not open!**  
Damp

Carlos  
#2  
**Mold Experiment**  
**Do not open!**  
Dry

### Warning

Because molds can be harmful to health, do **not** allow your child to open the containers. They should observe the closed containers only. Throw away the containers and their contents when the experiment is finished.

8. You can help your child fill out the form below to record what he or she sees.

- Remind your child not to open the containers.
9. Keep watching for one to three weeks—until you have at least one obvious crop of mold.
- Finish filling out the table.
  - Then make sure to throw away the closed containers.

Help your child record what he or she observes by filling out the form below.  
 Discuss the results with your child.

Your child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date the experiment begins: \_\_\_\_\_

Container #	What's in it? (write the contents)		Where is it kept? (make a check mark)				When does mold start to grow? (write the date)
	Damp things	Dry things	Sun	Shade	Refrigerator	Freezer	
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							

Ask your child to talk about what he or she observed. You might ask the following questions.

<p>1. Where did mold grow first?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What number is the container?</li> <li>• What's in the container?</li> <li>• Was it damp or dry?</li> <li>• Where was it kept?</li> </ul>	<p>2. Where does mold grow most?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What number is the container?</li> <li>• What's in the container?</li> <li>• Was it damp or dry?</li> <li>• Where was it kept?</li> </ul>	<p>3. What does the mold look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What colors do you see?</li> <li>• Can you describe the texture (such as fuzzy, cottony, leathery, rough, smooth)?</li> </ul>
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**REMEMBER: Do not open the containers. Do not touch or smell the mold.  
 Throw away the closed containers when the experiment is done.**

### Home visitor’s feedback and follow-up notes

- Please fill in this form after you have completed the lesson and observed any follow-up activities. This training is a pilot program, and the course developers welcome your comments and suggestions on how to improve it.
- Please make a copy of this form, and give the copy to the Family Services Coordinator to forward to the developers. Please place the original in the child’s file.

Learner’s response to this lesson						
Did the learner find the topic	Please check the box that most closely applies					
	Interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boring
	Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to understand
	Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useless
Please summarize the learner’s plans to make changes as a result of this topic.						
Please identify any questions the learner had that were <b>not</b> covered in the topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please summarize any changes the learner actually made as a result of this topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please list the activities that the learner did with his or her child and any comments about those activities.						
Your feedback on this lesson						
What was the most useful part of this lesson?						
What was the least useful part of this lesson?						
Do you have any suggestions for improving this lesson? For example, was the lesson too long or too short, with too much information or not enough information?						
Additional comments						

Your name:

Date:

Topic: Mold and moisture

## Healthy Homes/Healthy Kids

### Lead Poisoning

#### Background information for trainers

Lead poisoning is a serious but preventable health problem. Lead can cause permanent damage—especially to the developing brains and nervous systems of unborn children and children under six years old.

While no amount of lead in the body is safe, the effects depend upon the level of lead in the blood. In children, even low levels are associated with lowered intelligence, learning and behavior problems, growth problems, hearing loss, and problems in maintaining a steady posture. Moderate levels can also harm the kidneys and liver. Very high levels can cause deafness, blindness, coma, convulsions, and death.

Children who have been lead poisoned are much more likely to have problems with reading, vocabulary, attention, fine-motor coordination, school attendance, and academic achievement. They are more likely to drop out of high school.

Lead can also damage adults. It can cause problems with reproduction, blood pressure, digestion, the nervous system, memory and concentration, and muscles and joints.

#### How could a child be exposed to lead?

The most common source of lead poisoning is the dust from old lead paint. Lead paint was banned for use in U.S. homes in 1978, but many houses and apartment buildings built before 1978 still have paint that contains lead. As the paint gets old, it may create dust and chips that contain lead. If children swallow the dust or chips, or breathe in dust, they can become lead poisoned. As a result, children who live in or visit homes built before 1978 may be at risk for lead poisoning. And if a home with lead paint has been or is being remodeled or renovated without proper precautions, these home repairs can create dangerous lead dust and paint chips.

The permanent removal of lead paint hazards (called *abatement*) should be done only by specially trained professionals who are certified by the Connecticut Department of Public Health. If removal is done incorrectly, it can create a greater danger.

For other work—such as renovation, repair, and painting—around a home, school, or daycare built before 1978, Environmental Protection Agency regulations apply in most cases. Contractors, property managers, maintenance workers, and others (including landlords) who are paid to work on these buildings must be certified by EPA and must follow specific work practices designed to prevent lead poisoning (called *lead-safe work practices*). Before they start working, renovators must also give residents a pamphlet called *Renovate Right*, which discusses lead safety during renovation.

Other sources of lead in the home include old lead pipes, soil contaminated with old paint or old leaded gasoline, batteries, and some old or imported pottery, toys, and novelties. Parents who work in lead industries (such as battery plants, radiator repair shops, or construction), could carry lead particles home on their clothing, shoes, and hair.



### What are the signs and symptoms of lead poisoning?

Children with lead poisoning may not look or act sick. And even if the children do show some signs of lead poisoning, these symptoms can often be mistaken for other illnesses, such as the flu, or for other conditions.

Early symptoms may include tiredness or restlessness, stomachache, constipation, irritability, and poor appetite. As more lead accumulates, children may become clumsy and weak, and they may lose skills that they have already learned. More severe symptoms may include vomiting, loss of sight or hearing, and lapses in consciousness (that is, going in and out of consciousness).

However, children may also show some of these symptoms for reasons other than lead poisoning. These symptoms may indicate other health conditions or other learning and behavior problems. The only way to know if a child has been lead poisoned is to test the child's blood lead levels. If families, guardians, or professionals suspect lead poisoning, a medical provider should test the lead level in the child's blood.

**All children should be screened for lead poisoning at the ages of one year and two years.**

Note: Testing laboratories must report all blood lead levels to the Connecticut Department of Public Health. For levels that are 10 micrograms per deciliter or higher (called "elevated blood lead levels"), follow-up—ranging from additional testing to hospitalization, depending on the lead level—is required.

### How might lead poisoning affect behavior?

Children who have been lead poisoned may show some of the following behaviors.

Babies and toddlers may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seem unhappy or cranky</li> <li>• Be difficult to soothe or cuddle</li> <li>• Cry or fuss more than normal</li> <li>• Have feeding and sleeping problems</li> <li>• Seem very sensitive to touch, tastes, noises, smells, or sounds</li> <li>• Be late in babbling or talking</li> </ul>
Preschoolers may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seem overactive, fidgety, uncooperative</li> <li>• Have difficulty paying attention while playing or performing simple tasks</li> <li>• Talk too much</li> <li>• Seem not to listen</li> </ul>
School-age children may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have problems concentrating and learning</li> <li>• Perform poorly</li> <li>• Disrupt their classes</li> <li>• Have problems with other children</li> <li>• Have difficulty tolerating frustration</li> </ul>

All of these behaviors may be normal occasionally in healthy children, or due to other conditions. In children with lead poisoning, though, they may be more severe or last longer.

Some of these behaviors may make parents, guardians, or caregivers feel annoyed or resentful and therefore less affectionate toward the child. They may feel like talking less and spending less time with that child. Understanding that these problems are caused by lead poisoning may help the adults to handle the children more effectively.

Some of the ways of helping a challenging child include the following:

- Encourage positive behaviors: For example, “You did a careful job of putting away your clothes.”
- Set up a daily routine to provide a regular structure for the child’s day.
- Try to arrange the environment to help the child behave calmly. For example, if noise disturbs a child, turn down or turn off the TV or radio.
- When a child seems close to losing control, step in calmly before that happens. Help the child move to another activity, cool off with a quiet activity (for example, reading or playing with clay), or blow off steam by active but safe play.
- Label the problem behavior without using harsh terms, and tell the child what he needs to do about it. For example, “You’re too excited. You need to take a break before something gets broken.”
- Move the child to a new activity if she can no longer concentrate on a task, or give her a break and have her return to the task later.
- Warn the child when the end of the activity is approaching. Give him limits that he can understand: “You can push the button two more times, and then you must stop.”
- Warn the child when something new or different is about to happen. Allow her time to adjust to the new situation, watching or staying near a caring adult during the experience.

Note: Some statewide and local agencies may offer help in solving lead-paint problems.

## Resources for trainers

### For children

Bothell, J., and Bothell, S.; translated by J. Arce, 2003, *Henry and Fred Learn about Lead/Enrique y Federico aprenden sobre el plomo*, [www.hec.uconn.edu/programs.html](http://www.hec.uconn.edu/programs.html)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012, *Ethan’s House Gets Healthier with a Visit from the Lead Poisoning Prevention Team*, [http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/coloring\\_book/Coloring\\_Book.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/coloring_book/Coloring_Book.pdf)

### For adults

Connecticut Birth to Three Program, Developmental Milestones, [www.birth23.org](http://www.birth23.org)

Connecticut Department of Public Health, Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Program, [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph), 860-509-7299

Connecticut Network for Legal Aid, “Lead Poisoning: Know Your Legal Rights,” <http://ctlawhelp.org/lead-poisoning-legal-rights>

Hartford Regional Lead Treatment Center, 860-714-4792, [ssarvay@stfranciscare.com](mailto:ssarvay@stfranciscare.com)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, lists of less common sources of lead poisoning, such as traditional (folk) cosmetics and remedies,  
[www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/CaseManagement/caseManagement\\_appendixes.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/CaseManagement/caseManagement_appendixes.htm)

-----, *Lead Poisoning: Words to Know from A to Z*,  
[http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tools/LeadGlossary\\_508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tools/LeadGlossary_508.pdf)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *The Lead-Safe Certified Guide to Renovate Right*,  
<http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovaterightbrochure.pdf>

Yale-New Haven Regional Lead Treatment Center, 203-764-9106, [susan.jordan@yale.edu](mailto:susan.jordan@yale.edu)

Various U.S. agencies, [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov): recalls of consumer products, food, medicine, cosmetics, and environmental products

## Lesson Plan: Protecting Your Family from Lead Poisoning

### Learning objectives

At the end of this topic, learners will be able to

- Recognize the importance of preventing lead poisoning, especially in children
- Name the only way to know whether a child has been lead poisoned
- List three of the most common sources of lead in homes
- Identify three strategies to protect children from lead

Materials you'll need for this lesson

- Copies of handouts
- Pens or pencils

For children's activities

- Child's safety scissors or regular scissors for adult
- Colored pencils, pens, crayons, or markers
- Note for Handout 12: Cooking activities are intended to be done with foods that families already have or can buy.

Start with a review of the previous week's topic. See that topic for review suggestions.

### Introduce the new topic: lead poisoning

Distribute **Handout 1: Mystery illness**.

I'm going to describe an illness. I'd like you to guess what it is.

In children, this illness may

- Lower a child's IQ (intelligence)
- Lower a child's ability to read and do arithmetic
- Cause a child to have trouble paying attention in school
- Cause a child to have other learning and behavior problems
- Raise the risk that a child will drop out of high school
- Raise the risk that a child will someday become a criminal

In adults, this illness can cause problems with

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease and stroke
- Ability to think, reason, remember, and concentrate
- Depression
- Infertility and sexual problems
- Muscle and joint pain

It's important to note: This illness is preventable.

Ask.

What do you think this illness is? Asthma, flu, lead poisoning, leukemia?

Answer: lead poisoning.

Explain what lead poisoning is.

Lead poisoning is a serious but **preventable** disease. It occurs when the body contains dangerous levels of lead. In children, lead poisoning can cause lifelong learning, behavior, and medical problems. It is especially dangerous to the developing brains and nervous systems of unborn children and children under 6 years old. Besides the problems just mentioned, high levels of lead can cause seizures, coma, and even death.

Explain why young children are most vulnerable to lead poisoning.

Young children are at most at risk for lead poisoning for several reasons:

- Their developing systems absorb more lead than adult systems
- Their bodies are more sensitive to lead's damaging effects.
- Their normal behavior makes it more likely for lead to enter their bodies. Young children normally put their hands and other objects in their mouths. If their hands or objects have lead dust on them, the child can swallow it and become lead poisoned.

Unborn babies are also at risk. If a woman is exposed to lead **before** she becomes pregnant (even years before), the lead remaining in her body can be passed on to the baby. If the woman is exposed **while** she is pregnant, the lead can be passed from her blood to the baby.

But remember, adults aren't safe from lead either, as we noted at the beginning of this lesson.

Ask whether the learner knows how to tell if a person is lead poisoned.

Since lead poisoning is so serious, it's important to know if someone has this illness.

You might think that you could tell by some symptoms, but unfortunately, that's not the case. Sometimes—but not always—children with lead poisoning show signs or symptoms. However, these signs or symptoms may look like other illnesses, like the flu.

For example, in the early stages, children might have stomachaches, constipation, or poor appetites. As lead accumulates, they might become clumsy and weak, or lose skills that they already learned. For example, children who have been potty trained might start having accidents.

And, as even more lead accumulates, they may vomit, lose sight or hearing, lose consciousness, or, in rare cases, die. But remember, there can be other reasons for these symptoms.

Distribute **Handout 2: Tips for dealing with challenging behavior.**

Sometimes a child's behavior is a clue to lead poisoning, because lead poisoning can cause problems with behavior. However, the common behavior problems associated with lead may also be normal occasionally in healthy children, or may be due to other conditions. But these behaviors may be more severe or last longer in children with lead poisoning.

For example,

Babies and toddlers may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seem unhappy or cranky</li> <li>• Be difficult to soothe or cuddle</li> <li>• Cry or fuss more than normal</li> <li>• Have feeding and sleeping problems</li> <li>• Seem very sensitive to touch, tastes, noises, smells, or sounds</li> <li>• Be late in babbling or talking</li> </ul>
Preschoolers may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seem overactive, fidgety, uncooperative</li> <li>• Have difficulty paying attention while playing or performing simple tasks</li> <li>• Talk too much</li> <li>• Seem not to listen</li> </ul>
School-age children may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have problems concentrating and learning</li> <li>• Perform poorly</li> <li>• Disrupt their classes</li> <li>• Have problems with other children</li> <li>• Have difficulty tolerating frustration</li> </ul>

Remember, all of these behaviors may be normal in healthy children or may have other causes, so behavior alone does not tell us whether a child has been lead poisoned.

If a child in the family is showing challenging behavior, review the tips for handling such behavior, which are on Handout 2. Ask the learner to think of examples of how she could apply these tips to her own child.

Explain why children must be screened for lead poisoning. Distribute **Handout 3: Screening your child for lead poisoning.**

Sometimes children with lead poisoning show no signs or symptoms at all.

There is one way to know if a child has been lead poisoned: a blood test. The test is done by a health care provider (such as a doctor, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner). It measures the amount of lead in the child's blood.

To enroll in any Head Start program, your child must have had a blood test for lead at the ages of 12 months and again at 24 months. Connecticut law also requires testing for all children at these ages. Older children may also need to be tested if they were not tested at ages 12 and 24 months or if there are other medical reasons to test.

Medical providers must also ask some questions to find out whether your child might have been exposed to lead. These questions are listed on Handout 3.

If you suspect that your child has been exposed to lead, always check with your health care provider.

Ask.

Do you know what your child's blood lead levels were?

Explain the meaning of blood lead levels.

Blood tests for lead measure the results in *micrograms per deciliter*. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, any level of **5 micrograms per deciliter** or higher is a matter for concern.

If your child has a lead level of **10 or higher**, you should have received information from your local health department about ways to reduce your child's exposure to lead. Depending on the test results, your child may need additional testing or other follow-up care.

Explain the lifelong consequences of lead poisoning.

Remember what we said at the beginning of this lesson: lead causes serious problems in children's ability to think, to learn, and to behave well because it damages their brains. Lead lowers a child's IQ score (a measure of intelligence). Lead also makes it harder for a child to pay attention, plan, and think logically.

Children who have been lead poisoned may

- Do worse in arithmetic, reading, reasoning, and remembering
- Have problems completing tasks and following simple directions
- Be less able to solve problems
- Be more disruptive and fight more with other children
- Be more impulsive, less able to organize, and less persistent
- Be more easily frustrated, and less able to handle frustration
- Be more likely to have difficulty in school and to drop out of school
- Be more likely to become violent criminals

If a child in the family has had a blood lead level of 10 micrograms per deciliter or higher, explain that federal laws give lead-poisoned children certain educational protections. These laws, which are complicated, are just mentioned below. More information is available at <http://ctlawhelp.org/node/458#disabilities>.

Because children who have been lead poisoned can have such serious problems, they have certain educational rights.

Like other children, they are entitled to accommodations within regular education. If they do not show educational progress even with accommodations, they may be eligible for other educational support and services under two key federal laws.

The first law is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). This law ensures free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities that affect their educational performance. The law specifically lists lead poisoning as one of several conditions that may qualify a child for support and services.

The second law that may apply to children with lead poisoning is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and may cover students who are not eligible under IDEA.

Explain that lead poisoning cannot be cured.

Keep in mind that lead poisoning cannot be cured. Medical treatment, proper foods, and preventing further exposure to lead can lower the lead levels in a child's blood, but the damage that has already been done cannot be undone or repaired.

Ask the learner to guess how much lead it takes to poison a child. [Or, instead of asking, show the learner a few objects and ask her to choose the size. Objects might include a 1-pound can of food, a deck of cards, a pencil eraser, and a piece of paper with a pen or pencil dot, the size of a period at the end of a sentence.]

How much lead do you think it takes to poison a child? Which of the following answers do you think is correct?

- A pound of lead
- An ounce of lead
- A piece of lead the size of a pencil eraser
- A piece of lead the size of a dot (period) at the end of a sentence

Explain the correct answer.

An amount of dust the size of a dot, if swallowed regularly by a child, is enough to poison the child.

Explain the common sources of lead.

By now you may be wondering where lead comes from. We'll talk about the sources of lead, and then we'll talk about ways of protecting your family from lead in these sources.

The most common source of lead poisoning in the United States today is old lead paint—paint in homes built before 1978. After 1978, the federal government banned the use of lead paint in homes, but many older homes still contain lead paint.

There are several common ways in which this paint usually becomes dangerous.

- As it gets old, lead paint may turn to dust and small chips through normal wear and tear of painted surfaces, opening and closing of painted windows and doors, or problems from leaks or lack of maintenance, which can cause paint to flake or chip.

Imagine this situation: You have an old painted window where your baby likes to stand and look out at the yard. Every time you open or close the window, you create a little paint dust as the old paint slowly wears away. You may not even notice the small amount of dust. If that paint contains lead, when your baby touches the window sill, she gets lead dust on her hands. If she puts her hands in her mouth, as all babies do, she swallows the lead dust. If she swallows enough dust, she can be lead poisoned.

- Another way that paint can become dangerous is through activities such as routine maintenance, repair, and renovation that disturb lead paint, creating dust and chips.

Imagine this situation: You want to fix up your home, so you sand an old painted door before you repaint. The sanding creates lead dust, which falls on the floor. Your baby crawls near the door, gets lead dust on his hands, grabs a toy, and gets lead dust on the



toy. If he puts the toy in his mouth, as babies love to do, he swallows some lead dust. If he swallows enough dust, he can be lead poisoned.

- Lead paint may be on surfaces that young children can chew on, such as railings, window sills, old furniture, and old toys.

#### Explain other sources of lead.

Besides lead paint, you should be aware of other sources of lead.

- Lead may be in your soil.
  - It may come from paint dust and chips around older home; old leaded gasoline, especially near busy streets; certain old pesticides, and industrial air pollution.
  - If you track soil into your home, you may be bringing lead into your home.
- Lead may be in your water.
  - Household wells and public water supplies rarely contain lead. However, both old and new plumbing materials—such as pipes and solder—may contain lead.
  - Lead can leach into water, especially when the water is hot or sits in pipes for long periods—such as overnight.
- Sometimes even **new** consumer products contain lead. These products include
  - Toys
  - Jewelry
  - Trinkets
  - Candles
  - Furniture
  - Vinyl miniblinds
  - Vinyl lunch boxes
- Some other sources of lead include
  - Some canned foods, especially imported items
  - Some ethnic medicines and cosmetics
  - Some pottery with lead glaze
  - Stained glass
  - Fishing sinkers
  - Bullets
  - Adult workplaces where lead is common (such as battery recycling, radiator repair, refinishing old furniture, home repair and painting)

#### Explain the importance of preventing lead poisoning.

It's important to keep in mind that once a child has been lead poisoned, the damage is permanent. The only solution to lead poisoning is to prevent it from happening.

#### Explain the importance of knowing whether your home contains lead. Explain the legal rights of tenants and buyers regarding lead paint.

To start protecting your family, you need to know whether there is lead paint in your home.

If you are renting or buying a home built before 1978, the property owner must tell you if he or she knows of any lead paint in your apartment. The owner must also give you a booklet called *Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home* and must include a federal form about lead paint in your lease or sales contract.

Explain how to prevent lead poisoning. Distribute **Handout 4: Preventing lead poisoning**. Review the handout with the learner. Explain that you'll ask the learner to fill out the right columns for homework.

Now let's talk about some ways that you can protect your family from lead.

Review the methods listed on the handout.

The last item on the handout concerns diet. Explain that a diet low in fat and with appropriate amounts of calcium and iron help fight lead's damaging effects. Distribute **Handout 5: Foods that help the body fight lead's harmful effects**. Review the handout with the learner.

One of the ways to protect your children is to feed them foods that help the body fight lead's harmful effects.

Here are the key points:

- Full tummies fight lead.
- Foods that are low in fat fight lead.
- Foods that contain a lot of calcium fight lead.
- Foods that contain a lot of iron fight lead.

Summarize the topic. Distribute **Handout 6: Effects of childhood lead poisoning** and **Handout 7a: Where, oh where, is lead?**

**Handout 6: Effects of childhood lead poisoning** summarizes the reasons it is important to learn about lead. It explains the risks for your child, the effects on your family, and the effects on society.

Please look at **Handout 7: Where, oh where, is lead?** How many sources of lead can you find in this picture?

Distribute **Handout 7b: Where, oh where, is lead? Answer key**. Ask the learner how many lead sources he or she found.

How did you do in finding the possible sources of lead?

Were you surprised at how many sources could be found in an average home?

### Conclusion

Distribute **Handout 8: Tips for preventing lead poisoning**, which summarizes this lesson.

Today we've talked about lead poisoning—why it's so dangerous, especially for young children, and ways to prevent it.

Do you think that you'll make any changes as a result of what we've talked about today?

**Note to trainer: Please write down any changes that the learner plans to make. We would like to track the learner's plans to help measure the effectiveness of this training.**

Explain the homework to the learner.

For homework, please look around your home for sources of lead. If you don't already know, find out whether your home was built before 1978.

Fill out the actions you plan to take on **Handout 4: Preventing lead poisoning**.

**Introduce the activities for children.**

**Handouts 9 through 13** contain activities for children. Select the activities that are most appropriate for the learner's family and distribute those handouts.

Here are some activities to teach your child about lead and how to stay safe from it.

### **Evaluation**

Please complete the **Home visitor's feedback and follow-up notes** after you have finished the lesson. You may wish to wait until your next visit to answer the follow-up questions about what changes the learner has made and what activities the learner has used with his or her children. Then return the form to the Family Services Coordinator.

### **Review**

After you have completed this topic, you may want to review it with the learner during your next home visit. Ask what the learner remembers.

During our last visit, we talked about lead poisoning. Would you like to tell me what you remember about what we said?

See how much the learner recalls. You might remind the learner of the following information.

- Young children are most at risk for lead poisoning.
- Lead poisoning causes serious learning, behavior, and medical problems.
- These problems are permanent.
- Most lead poisoning is caused by dust from paint in homes built before 1978.
- The only way to know if someone has been lead poisoned is through a blood test.
- Lead poisoning can be prevented.

Ask open-ended questions, such as the ones below. Make a note of any progress the learner has made or any questions the learner may have about this topic.

How are you doing with methods to prevent lead poisoning?

Did you fill in **Handout 4: Preventing lead poisoning**? Have you used any of the strategies on the handout?

Do you have any questions about this topic?

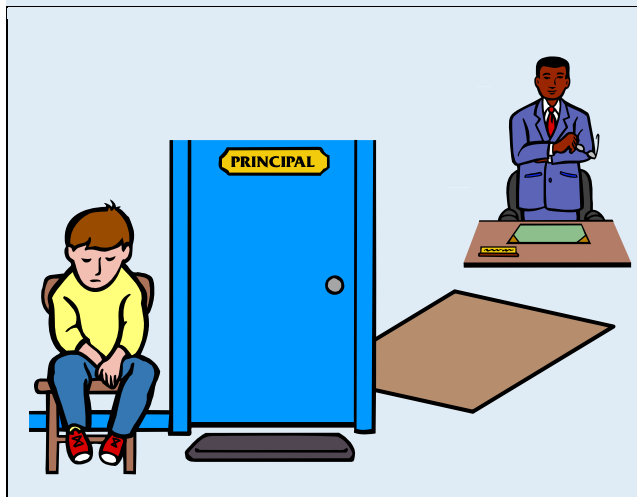
Have you had an opportunity to do any of the activities with your child? If so, how did those go?

## Handout 1      **Mystery Illness**

Below are the ways that a particular illness can affect children and adults.

This illness damages a young child's developing brain. It may

- Lower a child's IQ (intelligence)
- Lower a child's ability to read and do arithmetic
- Cause a child to have trouble paying attention in school
- Cause a child to have other learning and behavior problems
- Raise the risk that a child will drop out of high school
- Raise the risk that a child will someday become a criminal



This illness also harms adults. It may cause problems with

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease and stroke
- Ability to think, reason, remember, and concentrate
- Depression
- Infertility and sexual problems
- Muscle and joint pain



**This illness is preventable!**

Which of the illnesses below do you think best matches this description?

- Asthma
- Flu
- Lead poisoning
- Leukemia



## Handout 2      Tips for dealing with challenging behavior

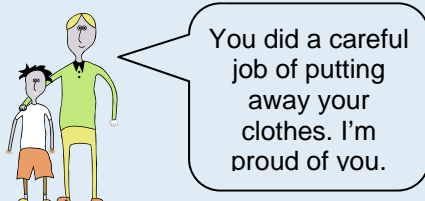
Children who have been lead poisoned may show some of the following behaviors.







Babies and toddlers may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seem unhappy or cranky</li> <li>• Be difficult to soothe or cuddle</li> <li>• Cry or fuss more than normal</li> <li>• Have feeding and sleeping problems</li> <li>• Seem very sensitive to touch, tastes, noises, smells, or sounds</li> <li>• Be late in babbling or talking</li> </ul>
Preschoolers may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seem overactive, fidgety, uncooperative</li> <li>• Have difficulty paying attention while playing or performing simple tasks</li> <li>• Talk too much</li> <li>• Seem not to listen</li> </ul>
School-age children may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have problems concentrating and learning</li> <li>• Perform poorly</li> <li>• Disrupt their classes</li> <li>• Have problems with other children</li> <li>• Have difficulty tolerating frustration</li> </ul>

It's important to keep in mind that all of these behaviors may be normal to some extent in healthy children, normal from time to time in healthy children, or due to other conditions. In children with lead poisoning, though, they may be more severe or last longer.

Some of these behaviors may make parents, guardians, or caregivers feel annoyed or resentful and therefore less affectionate toward the child. The adults may feel like talking less and spending less time with that child. Understanding that these problems are caused by lead poisoning may help the adults to handle the children more effectively.

Below are some ways to help a challenging child. Add your own examples.

Tip	Example	Your example
Encourage positive behaviors.	 <p>You did a careful job of putting away your clothes. I'm proud of you.</p>	

Tip	Example	Your example
<p>Set up a daily routine to provide a regular structure to your child's day.</p>	<p>It's time to get ready for bed. Let's get your teeth brushed.</p> 	
<p>Try to arrange the environment to help your child behave calmly.</p>	 <p>The noise seems to bother you. I'll turn off the TV now.</p>	
<p>If your child seems close to losing control, step in calmly before that happens.</p> <p>Help your child move to another activity—either a quiet activity to calm down or active but safe play to blow off steam.</p>	 <p>I see that you're getting frustrated with this game. Let's pick out a book to read quietly for a while.</p>	
<p>Label the problem behavior without using harsh terms.</p> <p>Then tell your child what he needs to do about it.</p>	 <p>You're too excited. You need to take a break so you don't get hurt.</p>	
<p>Move your child to a new activity if he can no longer concentrate on a task.</p> <p>Or give him a break and have him return to the task later.</p>	 <p>You've made a good start on putting away your toys. Let's listen to music for a while. Then you can finish putting away the toys.</p>	
<p>Warn your child when the end of the activity is approaching.</p> <p>Give her limits that she can understand.</p>	<p>I'll push you two more times on the swing. Then we need to go home.</p> 	

**Tip**

**Example**

**Your example**

Warn your child when something new or different is about to happen.

Allow her time to adjust to the new situation, watching or staying near a caring adult during the experience.



We're going to meet a new babysitter today. I'll stay with you while you get to know her a little.



## Handout 3      Screening your child for lead poisoning

To find out whether your child has been lead poisoned, a doctor, nurse, or other medical provider screens your child by testing his or her blood. The results of the test show your child's blood lead levels, which are measured in micrograms per deciliter.

If your child's blood lead level is **10 or above**, your child will need follow-up testing and may need further care. The type of follow-up depends on how high the blood lead level is. The higher the level, the more serious the problem is.

According to Connecticut law, medical providers

- **Must** screen for lead poisoning when the child is 12 months old and again at 24 months old
- **Must** screen if the child is between 2 years old and 6 years old and has not already been screened
- Should consider screening at any age under 6 years if the child is not developing normally
- Should consider screening if the child has symptoms that are associated with lead poisoning
- Should consider screening if the child swallows objects that are not food

In addition to the above situations, medical providers must ask the questions below to find out whether your child might have been exposed to lead. If the answer to any question is yes, your child must be screened for lead poisoning.

1. Does your child live in or regularly visit a home, daycare center, preschool, babysitter, relative, or other place that was built before 1960? Have you recently moved from a home built before 1960?
2. Does your child live in or regularly visit a house built before 1978 where there has been recent, ongoing, or planned renovation or remodeling?
3. Does your child have a history of a high blood lead level?
4. Does your child have a brother or sister, housemate, or playmate being followed or treated for lead poisoning?
5. Does your child frequently come in contact with an adult whose job or hobby involves exposure to lead? Examples include construction, welding, automotive repair, making stained glass or fishing sinkers, or using lead solder, artist paints, or ceramic glazes?
6. Does your child live near an active lead smelter, battery recycling plant, or other industry likely to release lead?
7. Does your child live near a heavily traveled major highway where soil and dust may be contaminated with lead?
8. Has your child been given any home remedies? Examples include azarcon (also known as rueda, coral, Maria Luisa, alarcon, liga); albayalde; greta; pay-loo-ah; ghasard; bala goli; kandu; kohl; litargirio; bebetina; chyawan prash.

Other questions might include



9. Has your child ever lived outside the United States
10. Does your family use pottery for cooking, eating, or drinking?









## Handout 4 Preventing lead poisoning





Below are some of the ways you can protect your children from lead poisoning.

Remember: Children should have a blood test for lead at the ages of 12 and 24 months. Children should also be tested at other ages too if they may have been exposed to lead.

Source of lead	How to protect your family	I already do this	I plan to do this	I have no plan to do this
Paint in homes built before 1978				
<p>Paint dust and flakes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash children’s hands often, especially after they play, before they eat, and at bedtime.</li> <li>• Wash children’s toys, bottles, and pacifiers often.</li> <li>• Keep children away from paint dust and chips.</li> <li>• Clean using <b>damp</b> methods to keep dust from spreading.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dust at least once a week with a <b>damp</b> paper towel or a rag.</li> <li>○ Clean floors at least once a week with a damp mop and detergent or a wet Swiffer®-type cloth.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Throw away the cleaning materials when you are done.</li> <li>• Don’t vacuum surfaces that may have lead dust (vacuuming may spread the dust).</li> <li>• Only adults should clean up paint dust and paint flakes</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paint on surfaces that young children may chew (such as window sills and railings)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Block surfaces that children might chew on</li> </ul> 			

Source of lead	How to protect your family	I already do this	I plan to do this	I have no plan to do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remodeling, renovation, and maintenance</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure that the company doing the work is certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you rent your home, the contractor, property owner, or maintenance worker must also be certified or must be supervised by a certified renovator</li> <li>Make sure that the people who do the work use methods that do not create or spread lead dust (called <i>lead-safe work practices</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>If you are doing the work yourself, take a course to learn how to work lead-safe</li> </ul>			
Other sources of lead				
<p>Soil that has lead from old paint, old leaded gasoline, old pesticides, or industrial pollution</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leave shoes at the door</li> <li>Have children wash hands after playing outdoors</li> <li>Wipe pet's feet before letting them into the home</li> <li>Do not allow children to play in bare soil</li> <li>If possible, cover soil with bushes, grass, or mulch</li> <li>Do not plant a vegetable garden in contaminated soil</li> </ul>			
<p>Plumbing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start with <b>cold</b> tap water for cooking, drinking, and making baby formula</li> <li>Let water run until it is as cold as possible</li> </ul>			

Source of lead	How to protect your family	I already do this	I plan to do this	I have no plan to do this
<p>Some new consumer products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toys</li> <li>• Jewelry</li> <li>• Trinkets</li> <li>• Candlewicks</li> <li>• Furniture</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch for recalls in newspapers, on the radio, on TV, or at <a href="http://www.recalls.gov">www.recalls.gov</a>. You can also download a free mobile app for a mobile phone at <a href="http://apps.usa.gov/product-recalls-2/">http://apps.usa.gov/product-recalls-2/</a></li> </ul>			
<p>Some imported canned foods</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once you open any can of food, do not store leftover food in the can</li> </ul>			
 <p>Some ethnic medicines and cosmetics, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greta</li> <li>• Azarcon (also called alarcon, coral, luiga, maria luisa, or rueda)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't use them</li> <li>• Instead, use medicines that your health care provider recommends</li> </ul>			

Source of lead	How to protect your family	I already do this	I plan to do this	I have no plan to do this
Pottery with lead glazes (most common in imported pottery) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't use for food or drinks</li> <li>• Use only for decoration—not for eating, drinking, or cooking</li> </ul>			
Fishing sinkers or bullets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep away from children</li> <li>• Look for products that do not contain lead</li> </ul>			
Adult workplaces (such as battery recycling, radiator repair, refinishing old furniture, home repair and painting) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults change clothes and shower before coming home</li> <li>• Launder work clothes separately from family laundry</li> </ul>			
All sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give children regular meals—don't let them get too hungry</li> <li>• Give children healthy foods that are low in fat</li> <li>• Give children foods that contain enough calcium and iron (like meat, milk, fish, cheese, or yogurt)</li> </ul>			

## Handout 5 Foods that help the body fight lead’s harmful effects<sup>1</sup>

<b>Full tummies fight lead</b>	A full stomach absorbs less lead than an empty stomach. Give your children four to six small meals and healthy snacks each day. Don’t let them get too hungry.
<b>Low-fat fights lead</b>	A well-balanced diet that is low in fat helps a child’s body absorb less lead.

### But wait until age 2 for low-fat foods

Children under 2 years old need more fat than older children. Here are general guidelines to follow for milk, unless your child’s medical provider says otherwise.

Babies up to 1 year old	Breast milk or formula
Children 1 to 2 years old	Whole milk
Children 2 years and older	Low-fat milk and other low-fat dairy products

Note: Some children are cannot digest milk and milk products or are allergic to them. Be sure to check with your child’s medical provider if you have any questions about whether to give your child milk and milk products.

### To give your child foods that are low in fat.

Instead of	Try
High-fat fast foods (like hamburgers, hot dogs, fried chicken, and fried fish)	Baked or grilled lean beef or pork, skinless chicken, or fish
French fries	Plain baked potatoes, steamed or baked vegetables, or salad
High-fat snacks (like doughnuts, potato chips, corn chips, cookies, pies, cakes, and candy)	Fresh fruits (like apples, pears, and bananas) Fresh vegetables (like carrots and celery) Applesauce Whole-grain cereal or bread Yogurt or cheese
Ice cream	Low-fat frozen yogurt
Lots of butter, oil, lard, or margarine	None, or just a little butter, oil, lard, or margarine

<sup>1</sup> This handout is adapted from *What You Should Know about Lead Poisoning: A Resource Manual for Child Care Providers*, University of Connecticut, Cooperative Extension System.

**Calcium fights lead**

<b>Dairy products</b> (for children who are not allergic to milk and who can digest dairy products)	<b>Nondairy foods</b> (especially for children who cannot digest milk and milk products or are allergic to them)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole milk for children 1–2 years old</li> <li>• Low-fat milk for children over 2 years old</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Yogurt: low-fat or nonfat</li> <li>• Low-fat cottage cheese</li> <li>• Low-fat cheese: plain cubes or in cheese omelet, macaroni and cheese, pizza, tacos, vegetable topping</li> <li>• Other foods made with milk: puddings, soups, custards, flans, pancakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Egg yolks</li> <li>• Dark green leafy vegetables: spinach, kale, collard greens, broccoli</li> <li>• Tofu (processed soybean curd)</li> </ul> <p><i>Warning: the foods below could be a choking hazard for young children</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sardines or canned salmon; mash the bones well before feeding</li> <li>• Nuts</li> </ul>

**Iron fights lead**

Some foods contain iron in a form that is easy for the body to use. Other foods contain iron that is more usable if it is eaten at the same meal as food high in vitamin C.

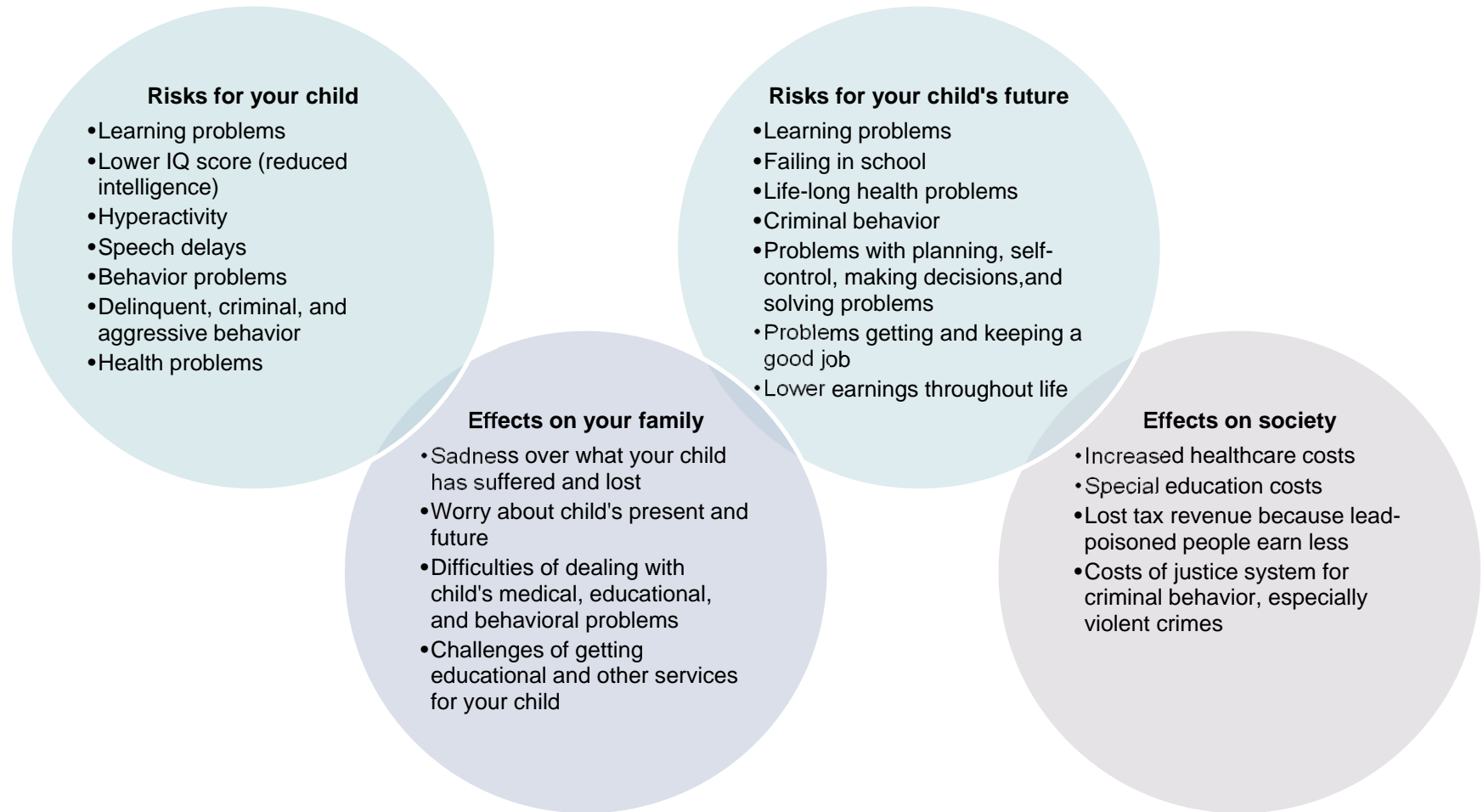
<b>Foods that contain iron and don't need vitamin C</b>	<b>Foods that contain iron and work best with vitamin C</b>	<b>Foods that contain vitamin C</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lean beef and lean pork</li> <li>• Chicken and turkey</li> <li>• Clams, oysters, and mussels</li> <li>• Sardines, tuna, and other fish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iron-fortified hot and cold cereals</li> <li>• Dark green leafy vegetables: broccoli, spinach</li> <li>• Dried beans: pinto, red, kidney, navy, garbanzo</li> <li>• Split peas and lentils</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Wheat germ</li> </ul> <p style="background-color: #fff2cc;"><i>Warning: the foods below contain iron but could be a choking hazard for young children</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dried fruit: raisins, prunes, figs, apricots, peaches, pears</li> <li>• Peanut butter (note that some children are allergic to it)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oranges and orange juice</li> <li>• Grapefruit and grapefruit juice</li> <li>• Strawberries</li> <li>• Cantaloupe</li> <li>• Green peppers</li> <li>• Cauliflower</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Cabbage</li> <li>• Potatoes cooked in the skin (well-scrubbed)</li> <li>• Tomatoes and tomato juice</li> <li>• Dark green, leafy vegetables</li> </ul>

**A Day of Nutritious Foods**

Below is a sample menu of healthy foods for a three- or four-year-old child. Keep in mind that each child is different, and that a young child’s appetite may change from one day to the next.

<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p>½ cup iron-fortified unsweetened cereal          ½ cup milk (low-fat)          ½ cup orange juice</p>	<p><b>Midmorning Snack</b></p> <p>1 slice whole wheat toast          ½ tb. peanut butter          1 tsp. jam (or jelly)          ½ cup apple juice</p>
<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <p>1 tuna salad sandwich on enriched or whole-grain bread          ½ cup clam chowder or lentil soup or bean soup          2 small whole-grain crackers          ½ cup milk (low-fat)          ½ small carrot, cut into thin sticks          1 apple, peeled and cut up</p>	<p><b>Midafternoon Snack</b></p> <p>½ cup vanilla or other flavored yogurt          ½ peach (canned, in juice) or fresh fruit</p>
<p><b>Dinner</b></p> <p>½ cup cooked enriched macaroni          2 oz. lean ground beef          ¼ cup spaghetti sauce          ¼ cup cooked spinach or broccoli          ½ cup milk (low-fat)</p>	<p><b>Evening Snack</b></p> <p>1 oatmeal cookie          ½ cup milk (low-fat)          ½ orange or tangerine</p>
	<p><b>Other healthy snacks</b></p> <p>Apple or pear slices          Cereal with low-fat milk          Fruit smoothies          Oranges or bananas          Raisins          Whole-grain crackers with cheese          Yogurt</p>

## Handout 6      **Effects of childhood lead poisoning<sup>2</sup>**

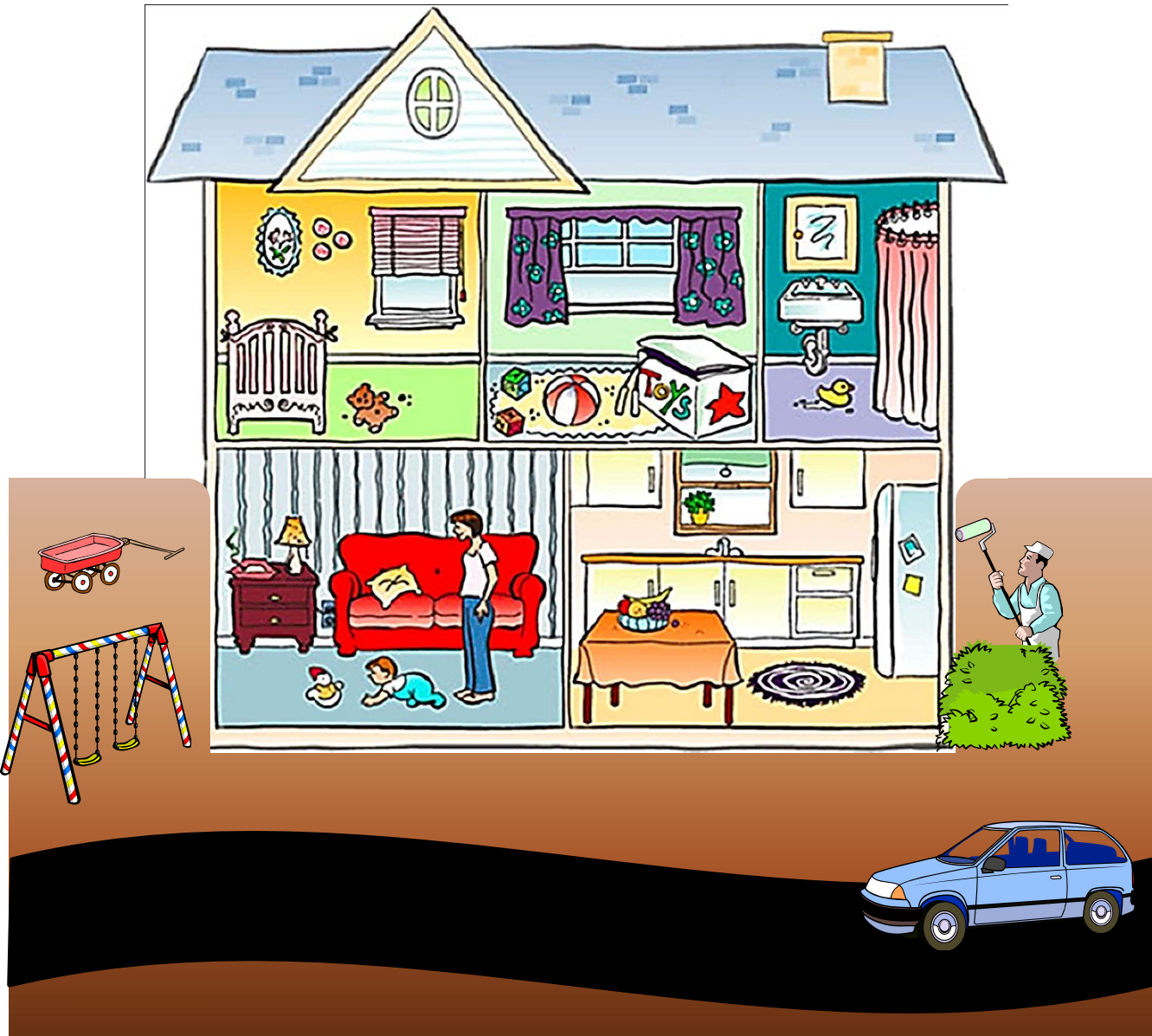


<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Lead Safe Illinois, "Ripple effects of childhood lead poisoning," [www.lead-safe-illinois.org/facts/ripple-effects.asp](http://www.lead-safe-illinois.org/facts/ripple-effects.asp)



## Handout 7a                      Where, oh where, is lead?

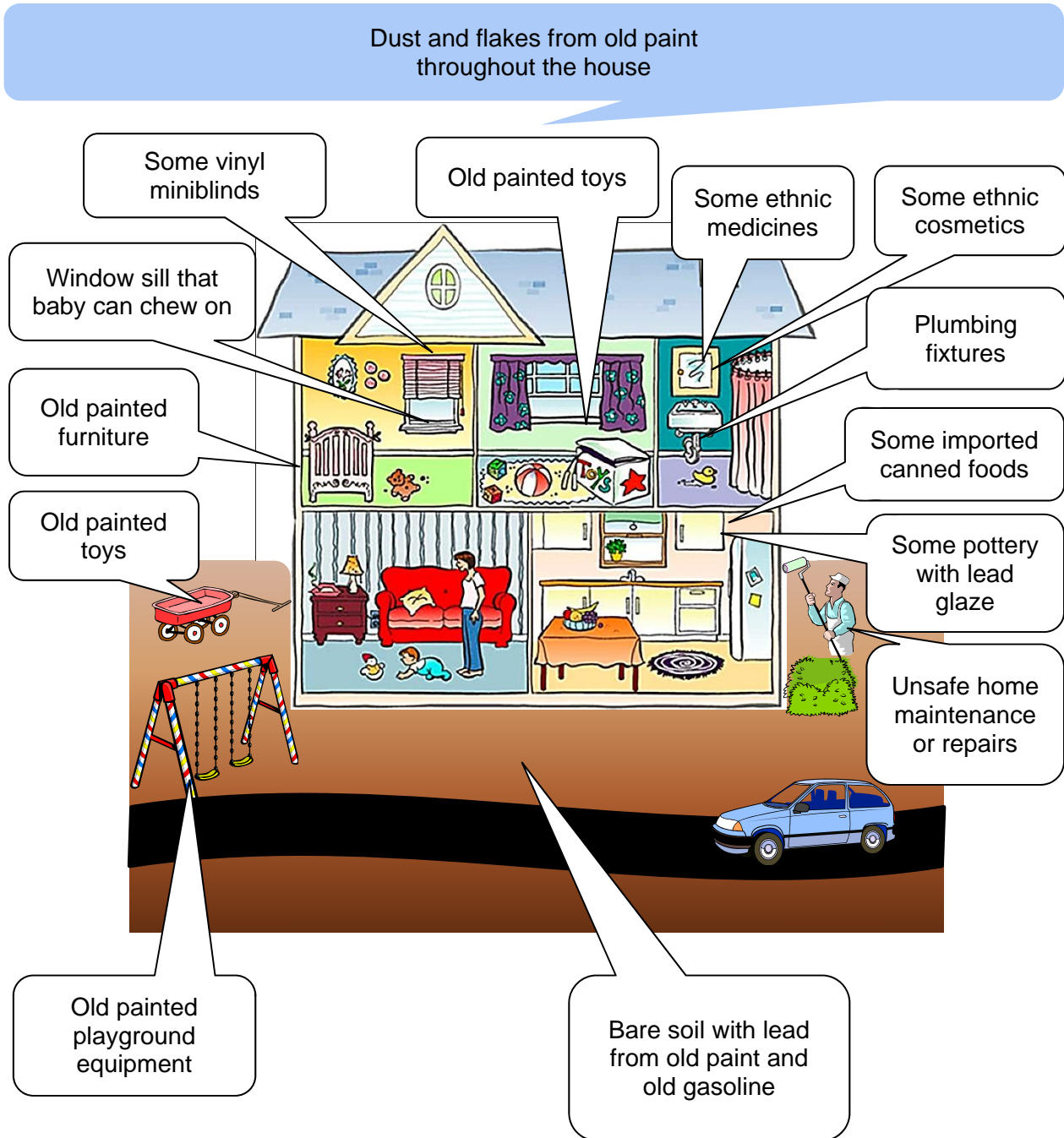
How many possible sources of lead can you find in the picture below?<sup>3</sup>  
Assume that this house was built before 1978. Circle all the possible sources of lead that you find.



<sup>3</sup> This picture of a home is reprinted with permission from Home Safe Kids, Michigan State University Extension, <http://www.fcs.msue.msu.edu/homesafekids/homesafekids-lead.htm>.

### Handout 7b

### Where, oh where, is lead? Answer key



## Handout 8 Tips for preventing lead poisoning

No amount of lead in the body is safe. Make sure that your children are tested for lead at ages 1 and 2 years (and at other ages, if your child is at risk). Any level at or above 5 micrograms/deciliter may cause problems. If your child's level is 5 or higher, try to find and remove the sources of lead.

Give your child regular healthy meals and snacks to eat. Keep their tummies full to help keep them from absorbing lead. Feed foods that contain calcium, iron, and vitamin C.

### Paint dust or flakes in homes built before 1978

- Clean up dust and flakes by **damp** wiping or **damp** mopping (not dry sweeping or vacuuming, which can spread lead dust)
- Keep children away from places that have peeling or chipping paint or surfaces that children might chew on (such as window sills)
- Wash and dry your child's hands, especially before eating and sleeping, and after playing
- Wash and dry your child's toys and pacifiers often
- Learn to work lead-safe if you do home repairs
- Make sure that anyone who works on your home uses lead-safe work practices



### Soil

- Ask people to leave their shoes at the door
- Do not let children play in bare dirt
- Wash children's hands after they play outdoors



### Water

- Use cold water from the tap for drinking, cooking and making formula. Let water run for 1-2 minutes before using it



### Products

- Do not store leftover canned food in the can
- Do not use imported pottery for food or drinks
- Avoid ethnic remedies and cosmetics that may contain lead
- Avoid old painted furniture and toys that may contain lead
- Check for recalled products at [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov)



## Handout 9      Activity for children: Clean hands clobber lead

Washing their hands helps children stay healthy for several reasons. First, it stops germs from spreading. Second, it removes lead dust from their hands, so they don't swallow lead when they eat or put their hands in their mouths.

Teach your children to wash their hands

- Before and after eating
- Before and after touching food
- After using the bathroom
- After playing inside or outside
- After blowing their noses or coughing
- After touching any animals, including pets
- After touching anything dirty, like a trash can
- After being near someone who is sick
- Whenever they are dirty
- Before they go to sleep

Teach your children these steps to wash their hands well:

1. Wet your hands with warm water.
2. Add any soap.
3. Rub your hands together to make bubbles.
4. Scrub both sides of your hands, your wrists, between your fingers, and under your fingernails.
5. Keep washing until you have sung the song below.

Clean Hands Clobber Lead  
*Sing to the tune of "Happy Birthday to You"*











I'm fighting lead today.	I'm beating lead today.
I'm fighting lead today.	I'm beating lead today.
I'm fighting lead by scrubbing well.	I'm beating lead today by scrubbing well.
I'm fighting lead today.	I'm beating lead today.










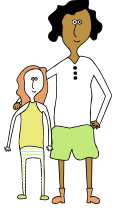
6. Rinse your hands well with warm water.
7. Dry your hands with a clean towel or paper towel.







## Handout 10                      Activity for children: Lead alphabet games

You can use the cards below to play alphabet games with your child and to teach your child rules about lead safety at the same time. You and your child can play several different games with these cards. For all of the games, cut out the cards and mix them up.

1. Find the letter game
  - You can call out a letter and have your child find the correct card.
  - Then read the lead message to your child, show the card to him or her, and see whether your child can repeat the message. Give your child hints if necessary, and praise any efforts and successes.
  - Next, you can ask your child to point out all the letters on the card that start with the same letter you called out. If your child has difficulty, you might need to show your child that some letters are capital letters and some letters are small (or lowercase) letters. You can explain that the capital letters and the small letters may look the same or different, but they always sound the same.
  - Repeat as long as your child stays interested. You probably won't get through all of the cards in one sitting, but you can continue the game at another time
  
2. Make up your own messages game
  - You and your child can make up other lead-safety messages.
  - Write them down, and ask your child to find the alphabet card that matches the first letter of the first word in the message.
  - Repeat as long as your child stays interested.
  - Praise your child's efforts and successes.
  
3. Memory game
  - After your child has played this game several times, you can turn it into a memory game.
  - Have your child pick a card and say the letter.
  - Then see if your child remembers the lead rule that matches that letter.
  - Repeat with additional cards as long as your child stays interested.
  - Offer hints if necessary, and praise any efforts and successes.

<p><b>A a</b></p> <p>Ask an adult to attend to paint dust and paint flakes.</p> 	<p><b>B b</b></p> <p>Bite some healthy big black beans.</p> 
<p><b>C c</b></p> <p>Chomp some chilly chunky cheese.</p> 	<p><b>D d</b></p> <p>Discuss lead dangers with your dearest doctor.</p> 
<p><b>E e</b></p> <p>Eat excellent eggs eagerly.</p> 	<p><b>F f</b></p> <p>Flee from funky paint flakes.</p> 
<p><b>G g</b></p> <p>Grab a grownup if you see gross paint dust or flakes.</p> 	<p><b>H h</b></p> <p>Have happy, healthy, handy foods.</p> 
<p><b>I i</b></p> <p>Invent another important idea to stay safe from lead.</p> 	<p><b>J j</b></p> <p>Jump away from lead in a jumbo jiffy.</p> 

<p><b>K k</b></p> <p>Kick lead out the kooky kitchen door.</p> 	<p><b>L l</b></p> <p>Don't let loose lead make you sick later.</p> 
<p><b>M m</b></p> <p>Swallow the magic milk in your merry mouth.</p> 	<p><b>N n</b></p> <p>Never nibble nasty paint dust or paint flakes.</p> 
<p><b>O o</b></p> <p>Offer your octopus an omelet of healthy eggs and veggies.</p> 	<p><b>P p</b></p> <p>Never poke peeling paint.</p> 
<p><b>Q q</b></p> <p>Ask questions quickly if you don't know quite what to do.</p> 	<p><b>R r</b></p> <p>Follow the right rules regularly to stay really safe from lead risks.</p> 
<p><b>S s</b></p> <p>Leave your shoes at the door, and wear slippers or socks inside.</p> 	<p><b>T t</b></p> <p>Tell a trusty grownup if you notice even truly tiny paint flakes or paint dust.</p> 

<p><b>U u</b></p> <p>If you don't <b>understand</b> how to <b>use</b> a rule, ask a helpful grownup.</p> 	<p><b>V v</b></p> <p>Win a <b>victory</b> over lead by eating <b>very valuable</b> vegetables.</p> 
<p><b>W w</b></p> <p><b>Wash</b> your hands with soap and <b>warm water</b>.</p> 	<p><b>X x</b></p> <p><b>Explain</b> to your friends that lead can make you sick.</p> 
<p><b>Y y</b></p> <p><b>Yell</b> that lead is <b>yucky</b>.</p> 	<p><b>Z z</b></p> <p><b>Zoom</b> your <b>zany zebra</b> away from lead in the <b>zoo</b>.</p> 



## Handout 11 Activity for children: Henry and Fred Learn about Lead<sup>4</sup>

Read this poem aloud to your child, in English, Spanish, or both languages. Then do the activity at the end of the poem.

### Henry and Fred Learn about Lead

Henry B. Careful is someone you'd like.  
He's friendly and cheerful, a happy small tike.  
He's a regular boy with one habit that's great:  
He thinks about safety before it's too late.



Now Henry B. Careful and Fred, his pet mouse,  
Have moved in with Grandma in her great gray old house.  
With his mom and his dad and his sweet sister Sue,  
They're snug and together, like toes in a shoe.



But the house is so old that its gray paint is peeling,  
With flakes on the windows and flakes on the ceiling.  
Paint dust on the floors is as blue as the walls,  
Making puffy blue dust clouds wherever it falls.



### Enrique y Federico aprenden sobre el plomo

Enrique A. Segura es alguien de quien gustar.  
Es amigable y entusiasta, un chiquillo a tratar.  
Es un niño muy normal con una costumbre sensacional:  
Siempre piensa en la seguridad sin que sea ocasional.

Enrique A. Segura y Federico, su mascota el ratón  
Se han mudado con su abuela a su gran mansion.  
Con su papá, su mamá y su hermana Sofía  
Están juntos y acurrucados con mucha alegría.

Pero la casa es vieja y la pintura se cae en pedacitos.  
Hay cascaritas de pintura en la ventana y en los rinconcitos.  
El polvo en el piso es azul como las paredes  
Y forma una nube cuando la sacudes y te mueves.

<sup>4</sup> From *Henry and Fred Learn about Lead* (2003), by Joan Bothell and Sarah Bothell, reprinted with permission of the authors. Spanish translation by José E. Arce.

“Henry B. Careful,” his dad said one evening,  
“You’ve got to watch out for the paint that is  
peeling.  
In houses so old, the paint contains lead,  
And lead makes kids sick—it could even hurt  
Fred.”

“We’ll help Grandma fix it, of that there’s no  
doubt,  
But until it is fixed, you’ve got to watch out.  
A few easy rules can protect you and Sue.  
Listen carefully now as I say what to do.”

“You’ve both got to stay far away from paint  
dust.  
As well as paint flakes: please don’t touch  
this stuff.  
Keep dust out of your mouth, keep it out of  
your nose.  
This rule may seem silly, but that’s how it  
goes.”

“Your sister is little. We’ve got to protect her.  
To make sure she’s lead-safe, the doctor will  
check her.  
If you see little Sue near paint flakes or paint  
dust,  
Please whisk her away: you really just must.”



“Enrique A. Segura”, le dijo su papá una mañana,  
“Ten cuidado con la pintura que se cae en la casa.  
La pintura contiene plomo que es muy peligroso  
Puede enfermarte a tí y a Federico sin dar ningún  
aviso”.

“Ayudaremos a su abuela a resolver este problema,  
Pero hasta que lo resolvamos, hablaremos del  
tema.  
Algunas reglas pueden protegerte a tí, a Sofía y  
Federico,  
Escucha atentamente y aprende mucho, chiquito”.

“Ustedes tienen que alejarse del polvo, de la  
pintura,  
Y no toquen los pedacitos; eso será una locura.  
No dejes que el polvo entre en la boca o por la  
naríz.  
Esto puede parecer tonto, pero si lo haces, siempre  
serás feliz”.

“Tu hermana es pequeña. Tienes que protegerla.  
Para asegurar que su sangre no tiene plomo, el  
doctor va a verla.  
Si tu hermana está cerca del polvo ó cascaritas de  
pintura,  
Sácala de ahí, ésta es la regla mas segura”.

“Tell Mom, Grandma, or me where dust hides  
or flakes lurk.  
And we’ll clean it up so that you don’t get  
hurt.  
With wet rags and some soap, we’ll clear it  
away.  
We’ll make it safe for you and then you can  
play.”

“Wash your hands after playing, and before  
you start eating.  
Use soap and warm water: don’t think about  
cheating.  
Leave your shoes at the door. Don’t track  
lead dust inside.  
Put on slippers or socks: I’ll let you decide.”

“Eat foods that are healthy, like cheese and  
good bread.  
'Cause they help your body to fight off bad  
lead.  
Yogurt and milk, and tuna and beans,  
Veggies and eggs and meat that is lean.”

Henry B. Careful went over to Fred,  
And told his pet mouse some things about  
lead.  
“I’ll stay far from lead paint—its flakes and its  
dust,  
If I see it around, I’ll tell grownups I trust.



“Si ves polvo ó cascaritas, dile a tu mamá, a tu  
abuela ó a mí,  
Entonces para que no te enfermes, limpiaremos por  
allá y por aquí.  
Limpiaremos la casa con un trapo mojado y algo de  
jabón,  
La haremos un lugar seguro para que juegues sin  
preocupación”.

“Lávate las manos antes de comer y después de  
jugar.  
Usa agua y jabón y no te olvides de enjuagar.  
Deja los zapatos en la puerta para que el polvo no  
pueda entrar.  
Ponte tus pantuflas ó calcetines; que yo te dejaré  
seleccionar”.

“Come alimentos saludables, como el pan y el  
queso,  
Ayudan a luchar con el plomo y lo malo de eso.  
Yogurt, leche, atún y frijoles,  
Huevos, vegetales y carne están entre los mejores”.

Enrique A. Segura fue a ver a Federico  
Y al ratón le dijo, “Sobre el plomo yo te explico.  
El plomo puede dañarnos; de esto no me río,  
Si veo plomo aquí, les diré a los adultos en quien  
confío.

“I’ll wash my hands slowly and use lots of soap.  
 I’ll rinse really well: that’s one way to cope.  
 I’ll leave shoes at the door, on the mat, nice and neat.  
 I’ll eat healthy foods, not just chips and things sweet.”

Henry B. Careful lives in Grandma’s old house,  
 With his mom, dad, and sister, and his little pet mouse.  
 Henry B. Careful has learned what to do,  
 To keep safe from lead, and stay healthy like you.



“Me lavaré las manos y usaré jabón,  
 Me enjuagaré y no seré un tonto sin razón.  
 En la puerta sobre el tapete, dejaré mis zapatos,  
 Y en vez de dulces y papas fritas, comeré alimentos sanos”.

Enrique A. Segura vive en una gran mansión  
 Con su abuela, sus padres, su hermana y su ratón.  
 Enrique A. Segura aprendió lo que tiene que hacer  
 Para estar a salvo del plomo, y saludable como tú,  
 siempre ser.

Below are some **incorrect rules** about how to stay safe from lead.

- Read the title and each rule to your child.
- Then ask your child what the **correct** title and rule are. Help your child with the correct answers if necessary.

### Rules to protect us from bread

1. Stay away from paint brushes and paint cans.
2. Ask a dog to clean up paint dust and paint flakes.
3. Leave your toes at the door.
4. Wash your hat after playing and before eating.
5. Eat happy foods.

### Correct Answers







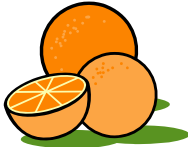






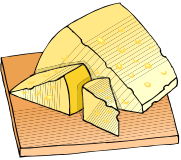


Rules to protect us from ~~bread~~ **lead**

1. Stay away from paint ~~brushes~~ **dust** and paint ~~ears~~ **flakes**.
2. Ask a ~~dog~~ **grownup** to clean up paint dust and paint flakes.
3. Leave your ~~toes~~ **shoes** at the door.
4. Wash your ~~hat~~ **hands** after playing and before eating.
5. Eat ~~happy~~ **healthy** foods.

## Handout 12 Activity for children: Pick out healthy foods

Foods that are low in fat and high in iron and calcium can help fight the effects of lead.

1. Cut out the pictures below, or help your child cut them out.
2. Ask your child to pick out the healthy foods that help his or her body fight off lead. Praise your child for correct answers.
3. If your child makes some mistakes the first time, count the number of correct answers. Shuffle the pictures and repeat the activity several times. Encourage your child to get more correct answers each time.

Spinach 	Nuts 	Greasy hamburger 	Sardines 
Gum 	Doughnuts 	Oranges 	Cake 
Milk 	Turkey 	Potato chips 	Dried beans 
Candy bar 	Cheese 	Lean meat 	Yogurt 

### Correct answers


Healthy foods		
Cheese	Nuts	Spinach
Lean meat	Oranges	Turkey
Milk	Sardines	Yogurt

Unhealthy foods	
Cake	Greasy hamburger
Candy bar	Gum
Doughnuts	Potato chips


## Handout 13 Activity for children: Cook up some healthy foods that fight lead's effects<sup>5</sup>

With your child, select one or more of the healthy recipes below. Prepare the recipe as directed, and choose simple, safe tasks your child can do to help.


An adult should do all cutting, handling of raw meat and eggs, and cooking. Your child might help with tasks like measuring oatmeal, sprinkling cinnamon on French toast, swirling peanut butter and jelly into oatmeal, putting banana slices on French toast, and setting the table.


For breakfast	
<p><b>French Toast</b> <i>Makes 4–6 servings</i></p> <p>3 eggs, beaten                      1/2 cup of low-fat milk                      Vegetable oil                      6 slices of bread                      Cinnamon                      2 bananas, sliced</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mix eggs and milk.</li> <li>• Lightly coat pan with vegetable oil, and heat with medium heat.</li> <li>• Dip bread into egg mixture, so that bread is covered.</li> <li>• Brown one side of bread in pan.</li> <li>• Sprinkle top with cinnamon.</li> <li>• Turn bread over, and brown the other side.</li> <li>• Top with sliced banana.</li> </ul> <p>Serve with orange sections and low-fat milk.</p>	<p><b>Cheesy Scrambled Eggs</b> <i>Makes 2–3 servings</i></p> <p>3 eggs                      1 tablespoon of low-fat milk                      Vegetable oil                      3 tablespoons of cheese                      Salsa (optional)</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mix eggs and milk in a bowl.</li> <li>• Lightly coat pan with vegetable oil, and heat with medium heat.</li> <li>• Add egg mixture to pan, and stir as eggs cook.</li> <li>• Sprinkle cheese on top, and stir to finish cooking.</li> <li>• Top with salsa if you like.</li> </ul> <p>Serve with toast, fruit or applesauce, and low-fat milk.</p>
<p><b>Oatmeal Swirlers</b> <i>Makes 4–6 servings</i></p> <p>1 1/2 cups of quick cooking oats                      1/3 cup of peanut butter                      1/3 cup of fruit jelly or jam</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the package directions to cook the oats.</li> <li>• Spoon peanut butter and jelly on top of cooked oatmeal, and stir.</li> <li>• Spoon oatmeal into bowls.</li> </ul> <p>Serve with sliced banana, orange juice, and low-fat milk.</p>	

<sup>5</sup> Recipes adapted from *Fight Lead Poisoning with a Healthy Diet*, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA 747-F-01-004, <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/nutrition.pdf>. Many of the foods listed in these recipes can be bought with food vouchers from the WIC program.

<b>For lunch</b>	
<p><b>Grilled Cheese and Tomato Sandwich</b> <i>Makes 1 serving</i></p> <p>2 slices of bread 2 slices of American or other cheese 1 slice of tomato Vegetable oil</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sandwich using bread, cheese, and tomato.</li> <li>• Lightly coat pan with vegetable oil.</li> <li>• Brown sandwich on both sides over low heat to melt the cheese.</li> </ul> <p>Serve with coleslaw and low-fat milk or fruit juice.</p>	<p><b>Pizza Bagels</b> <i>Makes 2–3 servings</i></p> <p>1 bagel 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce Garlic, basil, or oregano (or a combination) 2 tablespoons of cheddar cheese or part-skim mozzarella</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preheat oven to 400 degrees.</li> <li>• Slice open a bagel and lightly toast.</li> <li>• Place toasted bagel on a flat pan or baking sheet.</li> <li>• Spread tomato sauce, seasonings, and cheese across bagel halves.</li> <li>• Bake in oven for 3 minutes or until cheese melts.</li> </ul> <p>Serve with 100% fruit juice, fresh or canned peaches, and low-fat milk.</p>
<p><b>Tuna Salad Sandwich</b> <i>Makes 2 servings</i></p> <p>4 slices of bread 1 can of water-packed tuna 4 teaspoons of low-fat mayonnaise Onion and celery, chopped Tomato and cheese (optional)</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mix tuna with low-fat mayonnaise, onion, and celery.</li> <li>• If you like, add a slice of cheese and tomato.</li> </ul> <p>Serve with low-fat milk, cranberry juice, and pear slices.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>A whole-wheat bagel is healthier than a plain bagel.</p> </div>



For dinner	
<p><b>Baked Macaroni and Cheese</b> <i>Makes 3–5 servings</i></p> <p>4 cups of cooked macaroni 3 cups of grated cheddar cheese Vegetable oil 2 tablespoons of margarine 2 cups of low-fat milk 2 tablespoons of flour Salt and pepper</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preheat oven to 375 degrees.</li> <li>• Lightly coat casserole dish with vegetable oil.</li> <li>• Pour cooked macaroni into casserole.</li> <li>• Melt margarine in a pan. Remove from heat, stir in flour. Return to heat.</li> <li>• Add milk slowly, stirring until smooth.</li> <li>• Add cheese and continue stirring until cheese is melted and sauce is smooth.</li> <li>• Season with salt and pepper to taste.</li> <li>• Pour sauce over macaroni. Stir.</li> <li>• Cover. Bake for 30 minutes.</li> <li>• Uncover and bake for another 15 minutes.</li> </ul> <p>Serve with stewed tomatoes and melon slice.</p>	<p><b>Sloppy Joes</b> <i>Makes 4–6 servings</i></p> <p>1 pound of lean ground beef, turkey, or chicken 1 small onion, chopped 1/2 green pepper, chopped 1 cup of tomato sauce Your choice of seasonings 5 hamburger buns or pita pocket breads</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a pan, cook lean ground meat, onion, and green pepper until meat is well done.</li> <li>• Drain fat.</li> <li>• Stir in tomato sauce and seasonings.</li> <li>• Cook for 5 to 10 minutes.</li> <li>• Spoon into hamburger bun or pita.</li> </ul> <p>Serve with low-fat milk and fruit juice or fresh fruit.</p>
<p><b>Chicken Stew</b> <i>Makes 6–8 servings</i></p> <p>3 pounds of frying chicken, cut up into small pieces Vegetable oil 1 medium onion, chopped 1 stalk of celery, chopped 1 28-ounce can of stewed tomatoes Poultry seasoning</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lightly coat pot with vegetable oil. Use medium heat.</li> <li>• Cook chicken until it is well done.</li> <li>• Add can of stewed tomatoes.</li> <li>• Add vegetables and seasoning.</li> <li>• Cover and cook over low heat for 30 minutes.</li> </ul> <p>Serve with rice or noodles and strawberries or other fresh fruit.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Remember: Adults should do all cutting and handling of raw meat.</p>

For snack or dessert	
<p><b>Banana Strawberry Smoothie</b> Makes 2–3 servings</p> <p>1 cup of low-fat milk 1 cup of fresh or frozen strawberries, mashed 1 ripe banana, mashed</p> <p>Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mix all together in a blender or use a wire whisk.</li></ul>	

### Home visitor’s feedback and follow-up notes

- Please fill in this form after you have completed the lesson and observed any follow-up activities. This training is a pilot program, and the course developers welcome your comments and suggestions on how to improve it.
- Please make a copy of this form, and give the copy to the Family Services Coordinator to forward to the developers. Please place the original in the child’s file.

Learner’s response to this lesson						
Did the learner find the topic	Please check the box that most closely applies					
	Interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boring
	Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to understand
	Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useless
Please summarize the learner’s plans to make changes as a result of this topic.						
Please identify any questions the learner had that were <b>not</b> covered in the topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please summarize any changes the learner actually made as a result of this topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please list the activities that the learner did with his or her child and any comments about those activities.						
Your feedback on this lesson						
What was the most useful part of this lesson?						
What was the least useful part of this lesson?						
Do you have any suggestions for improving this lesson? For example, was the lesson too long or too short, with too much information or not enough information?						
Additional comments						

Your name:

Date:

Topic: Lead poisoning

## Healthy Homes/Healthy Kids

### Controlling Pests Safely<sup>1</sup>

#### Background information for trainers

Pests like mice, cockroaches, mosquitoes, and ticks can bring serious health concerns into the home. As a result, many people react to the first signs of a pest problem by rushing to apply the strongest possible pesticides (chemicals designed to kill pests).

But using pesticides can cause its own set of problems. In fact, the harm caused by pesticides may be worse than the harm caused by the pests themselves. According to the University of California's *Integrated Pest Management: Curriculum for Early Care and Education Programs*, some of the health effects of exposure to pesticides include:

#### Short-term health effects (sudden exposure)

- Asthma attacks
- Coughing or difficulty breathing
- Nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, or diarrhea
- Headache or dizziness
- Blurred vision or irritated eyes
- Rash or other skin irritation
- Confusion

#### Possible long-term health effects

- Low birth weight and length
- Birth defects
- Genetic problems
- Learning disabilities
- Cancers
- Hormonal changes (disruption of the endocrine system)

Pesticides are especially dangerous to children. In proportion to their size, children eat, drink, breathe, and absorb through their skin more of the poisonous chemicals than do adults. They often touch surfaces where pesticide residues are found (floors, windowsills) and put their hands in their mouths. Their developing brains are also very susceptible to damage by certain pesticides, especially insecticides (pesticides designed to kill insects).

Experts now say that the best approach to a pest problem is *integrated pest management*, or IPM (sometimes called *green* or *environmentally friendly pest management*). IPM emphasizes preventing pest problems by getting rid of the food, water, and shelter that pests need to survive. It targets the **causes** of the pest problem, not just the symptoms. It integrates (or combines) various approaches to manage pests, focusing on the safest methods first.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Candace Bartholomew, University of Connecticut, Department of Extension, for her many helpful suggestions on this topic.

The advantages of IPM are

- It is effective at getting rid of pests.
- It prevents future pest problems.
- It is less likely to harm people, especially children, and pets.
- It can save time, money, and effort.

### Notes to trainers

This lesson may be too long for a single visit. If you feel that the learner is losing focus, stop the lesson for today and then continue it on your next visit. We have marked one logical stopping place in this lesson, but you will need to use your judgment for any given learner.

Because you visit families in their homes, you need to be alert to pests that you might carry away with you. No method is foolproof, but below are some suggestions to limit the chances of bringing a pest back to your own home or office:

- Bring into the home only the items you will need for your visit. Leave other belongings in your car or office.
- If possible, don't put your belongings (such as your purse or briefcase) on the floor, on upholstered furniture, or on a cluttered surface where pests might hide. Try to keep your belongings on your lap.
- After you leave the home you have visited, check your clothing (especially pant hems and cuffs), purse, briefcase, and other belongings for insect pests and their eggs.
- If you find anything, or if the home was heavily infested, you may want to change your clothing outdoors or in your garage. Then place your belongings in a zippered plastic bag, inspect them before bringing them into your home, and launder washable items in the hottest water possible.

### Resources for trainers

#### For children

Harris, N. 2010. *In These Walls and Floors (What's Lurking in This House?)*. Heinemann-Raintree.

Pest World for Kids, <http://www.pestworldforkids.org>

University of Connecticut, *Integrated Pest Management Curriculum for Connecticut*, for grades K through 12, [http://www.hort.uconn.edu/ipm/curriculum/currick\\_1.html](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/ipm/curriculum/currick_1.html)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Pesticide Safety Bingo, <http://www.epa.gov/region6/6pd/bingo/index.htm>

#### For adults

Cornell Cooperative Extension, *IPM for Homes*, <http://www.hort.uconn.edu/ipm/homegrnd/htms/homes.pdf>

Department of Community Medicine, Wake Forest University School of Medicine, *Send Pests Packing*, [http://www.migrantclinician.org/files/resourcebox/Send\\_Pests\\_Packing.pdf](http://www.migrantclinician.org/files/resourcebox/Send_Pests_Packing.pdf)

Spanish version:

[http://www.migrantclinician.org/files/resourcebox/Digale\\_Adios\\_a\\_las\\_Plagas.pdf](http://www.migrantclinician.org/files/resourcebox/Digale_Adios_a_las_Plagas.pdf)

University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and Isles, Inc.,  
*Arrest the Pests in Your Nest, part 1.* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pq3DYsgdoXk>  
Spanish version: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZmw2anGtg0>

*Arrest the Pests in Your Nest, part 2,*  
Spanish version: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFi29z16cvU>

Michigan Department of Community Health,  
*Don't Let Bed Bugs Bite,*  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/emergingdiseases/bed\\_bug\\_complete\\_web2\\_304873\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/emergingdiseases/bed_bug_complete_web2_304873_7.pdf)  
Spanish version:  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/emergingdiseases/BB\\_Pamphlet\\_Spanish\\_365265\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/emergingdiseases/BB_Pamphlet_Spanish_365265_7.pdf)

Migrant Clinicians Network, University of Texas, El Paso, *Poco Veneno...¿No Mata?*  
<http://www.migrantclinician.org/files/Poco%20Veneno%20Pesticide%20Comic.pdf>

Pest Resources Online, <http://pronewengland.org/>

University of California San Francisco, California Childcare Health Program, *Integrated Pest Management: A Curriculum for Early Care and Education Programs,*  
[http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/Curricula/ipm/Curriculum\\_FINAL%2010.2010.pdf](http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/Curricula/ipm/Curriculum_FINAL%2010.2010.pdf)

University of Maine, Cooperative Extension, *Homeowner IPM,*  
<http://umaine.edu/homeowner-ipm/>

## Lesson Plan: Controlling Pests Safely

### Learning objectives

At the end of this topic, learners will be able to

- Recognize the importance of controlling pests safely in and around their homes
- Name some pests that may create problems in or around their homes
- List some of the health problems that pesticides can cause in children
- Describe safer methods to control pests in and around their homes

### Materials you'll need for this lesson

- Copies of handouts
- Pens or pencils
- Poison control stickers, magnets, pens, or other items, if available

### For children's activities

- Various items for making a pest: various kinds of paper, fabric, felt, child safety scissors, pens and pencils, crayons, markers, pencils, glue, sticky tape, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, buttons, paper cups, or similar arts and crafts supplies.

Start with a review of the previous week's topic. See that topic for review suggestions.

Introduce the new topic: pests.

Start by asking what the learner thinks a pest is.

What is a pest?

Explain the correct answer.

A pest is any plant or animal—such as insects, mice, rats, and poison ivy-- that is somewhere it is not wanted. It may be inside or outside your home. Pests may annoy you, damage your home or things inside your home, cause or spread disease, or make you uncomfortable.

Ask the learner to think about common pests.

How many pests can you name in about a minute? Think about pests that might be inside or outside a house.

Count the number of pests that the learner names. Common answers might include the following:

Inside pests: mice, rats, pigeons, bats, bedbugs, fleas, ants, spiders, cockroaches, silverfish, flies, moths, lice

Outside pests: mice, rats, squirrels, raccoons, skunks, wasps, bees, yellow jackets, mosquitoes, ticks, poison ivy, poison oak

If the learner can't think of many examples, offer the ones above.

As you see, lots of pests can live in and around a home.

Explain the possible health problems that pests can cause.

Some pests—like ladybugs—may just be annoying but do no harm. Other pests can harm children and adults. For example,

- Rats and mice can carry diseases and can contaminate food, places where you prepare food, and other surfaces. They can also trigger asthma attacks. They can chew insulation on wires and cause fires.
- Cockroaches can also carry diseases and trigger asthma attacks.
- Stinging pests, such as yellow jackets, hornets, bees, and some ants, can cause very serious allergic reactions in some people.
- Flies can spread disease when they walk on food.

Ask the learner to consider pest problems in her own home.

You've named some pests that might be in a house. Do any pests actually live in or around your home? If so, what are they?

What kinds of problems do they cause or could they cause?

Ask the learner to explain what, if anything, she does to manage pests.

What do you do to get rid of them?

Activity: If the learner says she uses pesticides, ask whether she has any in the home right now. If so, ask to see the container.

Note where the container is being stored.

- If the pesticide is kept in a secure location, out of reach of children, praise the learner for keeping a dangerous item in a safe place.
- If the pesticide is kept where children can reach it, explain that the pesticide is very dangerous to children and should be stored elsewhere. With the learner, find a safe place to store the pesticide from now on.

Next, with the learner, read the warning label on the container. When you have finished, wash your hands in case there is any pesticide on the outside of the container.

Whether or not the learner currently has pesticides in the home, explain that pesticides can be very dangerous.

Because pests can harm our children's health, we don't want them around our homes. Many people react to the first signs of a pest problem by rushing to apply the strongest possible pesticides—chemicals that poison pests.

But using pesticides can cause its own set of problems. In fact, the harm caused by pesticides may be worse than the harm caused by the pests themselves.

In the short term, pesticides can cause

- Asthma attacks



- Coughing or difficulty breathing
- Nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, or diarrhea
- Headache or dizziness
- Blurred vision or irritated eyes
- Rash or other skin irritation
- Confusion

In the long term, pesticides may be associated with

- Low birth weight and length
- Birth defects
- Genetic problems
- Learning disabilities
- Cancers
- Hormonal changes

Pesticides used by professionals are more often associated with the more serious side effects.

However, in general there are safer ways to get rid of pests. We'll talk about them next.

Ask the learner to think about what a pest needs to survive.

What does a pest need to survive?

Explain the correct answer.

Food, water, and shelter.

Ask.

Where are pests most likely to find the food, water, and shelter in most homes?

Explain the correct answer.

Kitchens, bathrooms, and basements.

You've identified the rooms that are most likely to have pest problems. Many pests prefer places that are dark, moist, and quiet—away from household activities. But keep in mind that pests can be anywhere.

Explain signs of pests.

Regularly look around your home for signs of pests.

Some of the common signs of mice and rats include:

- Seeing or hearing the pest itself
- Dead pests or smells
- Droppings, hair, or nests
- Damage from gnawing on walls, wires, food, food packages, or newspapers
- Burrows next to walls outside the house

- Tracks or “runways” (areas where animals frequently run, usually along walls, where there is no dust or dirt)
- Grease marks along walls next to runways (from oil and dirt on animal fur)
- Animal smells

Some of the common signs of insects and spiders include:

- Seeing the pest itself—alive or dead
- Droppings
- Damage from eating food, wood or paper, clothing
- Smells or scratching sounds
- Webs

Activity: Ask whether the learner is willing to search for signs of pests now. If so, help her search. (If you do find signs of pests, remain calm and professional, even if what you find is personally distressing. The goal is to teach the learner why and how to eliminate pests, not to make the learner feel bad if pests are present.) If the learner prefers, or if you feel you may not be able to control your reaction if you find pests, ask her to search for signs of pests later.

- Check kitchens, bathrooms, and basements especially carefully, as those areas usually have the things that pests need to survive: food, water, and shelter.
- Check inside cabinets, other storage areas, and hard-to-reach places, especially moist areas, like under the sink.
- Check during the day and at night (when some pests, such as cockroaches and mice, are very active).

Explain the importance of identifying the pest.

If you see signs of a pest, try to identify the particular pest.

Once you identify it, decide if it is really a problem. Some insects, for example, are harmless or even helpful, though you may want them to live outside, not in your house. For example, you can simply sweep up ladybugs and put them outside.

Note to trainer: If the learner seems to be losing focus, this point might be an appropriate place to stop on this visit. Explain that you’ll discuss steps to get rid of pests during your next visit.

At the next visit, briefly review the material above:

At our last visit, we talked about pests. Remember that a pest is any plant or animal that is somewhere it is not wanted. Pests can carry diseases, contaminate food, and trigger asthma attacks. We also talked about the dangers of pesticides, which can cause problems even worse than pests themselves.

We also said that pests need food, water, and shelter to survive.

Today we’ll talk about safer ways of getting rid of pests.

Then continue the lesson. Explain the first step to get rid of pests.

**Step 1. Take away food, water, and shelter.**

- Take away food
  - Clean up kitchen counters and shelves. A small crumb can be a large feast for a pest.
  - Clean up food spills right away.
  - Put leftovers in the refrigerator or throw them away.
  - Wash dirty dishes promptly.
  - Keep garbage cans covered and take out garbage at least once a day.
  - Wash out bottles and cans for recycling.
  - Don't leave pet food out all day. Wash pet dishes after pets eat.
  - Store foods that pests like (like candy, cereal, crackers, flour, oatmeal, pasta, and pet food) in tightly covered containers that are hard for pests to get into (a covered glass jar works better than a plastic bag).
  - Clean under refrigerators and under and around stoves, where food may splatter.
- Take away water
  - Fix a leaky pipe right away, or ask the property owner to do so.
  - Don't keep containers of water out (except for pet water dishes).
  - To keep many insects away, get rid of all the water outside the house that is not being used (for example, turn over empty flowerpots and cans, dump water from outside toys and old tires).
- Take away shelter
  - Clean up places where pests love to hide, such as clutter, both inside and outside your home. Pests especially love things like newspapers, old food wrappers, and dirty clothes lying on the floor.
  - Keep trashcans covered and take out trash often.
  - If possible, keep woodpiles away from the home—not in the basement, in the garage, or on a porch. Mice, carpenter ants, and other pests often live in woodpiles.

Introduce the activity. Distribute **Handout 1a: Remove the welcome mat for pests**

Handout 1 lists some important actions you can take to help keep pests out of your home. See whether you can identify how the action takes away something the pest needs.

After the learner has completed the activity, distribute **Handout 1b: Remove the welcome mat for pests: Answer key**. Review the answers with the learner, and explain any errors.

Explain the second step to get rid of pests.

**Step 2. Keep pests out.**

- Use screens in windows. Fix any holes in screens.
- Close outside doors.
- Repair broken windows promptly, or ask the property owner to do so.
- Seal holes in walls, especially in kitchens and bathrooms, around pipes, sinks, and appliances, or ask the property owner to do so.
- Check things you bring home (such as used furniture, clothing, and cardboard boxes) to make sure that pests aren't hiding in them

Explain the third step to get rid of pests.

### Step 3. Capture or kill pests without dangerous chemicals

- Swat flying insects with a fly swatter.
- Stomp crawling insects with your shoe.
- Hang sticky flypaper from the ceiling (where children can't reach).
- Put out snap traps or glue boards for mice.
  - For snap traps, use bait, such as peanuts or peanut butter
  - Place traps or glue boards along walls and in corners, in closets, behind the refrigerator, in cabinets, or near entry doors.
  - Be sure that children and pets can't reach them.
  - Check traps often and throw away any dead mice you find. To handle a trap, wear disposable gloves or put the whole trap, along with the dead pest, into a plastic bag with no holes.
- Put out sticky traps for cockroaches. (These traps contain glue that traps pests.)
  - Place them where you have seen signs of pests, such as behind the stove and refrigerator or near cracks in the basement, or around the bathtub, shower, sink, and toilet.
  - Be sure to keep out of reach of children and pets.
  - Change them often.
  - Do not use poison bait traps around food.

Explain the fourth step to get rid of pests.

### Step 4. Use chemicals (pesticides) only when other methods fail

Use pesticides **only** if other methods haven't worked or haven't worked well enough. A pesticide is a poison that kills pests or keeps them away. Many pesticides are very poisonous not only to pests but also to people, especially young children, and to pets.

- Choose the right pesticide for the problem
  - Use the **safest** pesticide you can get for your problem pest. Get a chemical that kills the pest but doesn't hurt people (nontoxic) or one that is relatively safe for people (low-toxic).
  - The safest pesticides are usually gels, baits, traps (like ant traps and roach motels), or dusts (like boric acid powder) that go into cracks and crevices, not in open areas.
  - Sprays are usually more dangerous because the poisonous chemicals can stay on the floor, in furniture, in carpets, or on toys. Young children, who spend a lot of time on or near the floor, may touch leftover pesticides.
  - Although pesticides that are described as **organic** or **green** or **eco-friendly** are often less dangerous than other chemicals, they may still be harmful to people. For example, some organic sprays are made with thyme essential oil, which can irritate the skin, eyes, and lungs and can cause allergic reactions.
  - Buy pesticides only from a reliable store, not on the street.
  - Do not buy farm pesticides to use in your home.
  - If possible, buy only as much as you think you'll need at one time, so you won't have leftover pesticides to store.

- Follow the directions.
  - When you apply a pesticide, read the label and follow the directions very carefully.
  - Only adults should apply any pesticide, and you should wear gloves to keep the chemicals off your hands.
  - Do not use more pesticide than the label recommends.
  - When the container is empty, throw it away as the label directs.
  - If you have leftover pesticides that you want to keep, store them in their original containers. The labels should have safety information.
- NEVER pour leftover pesticides in old food or beverage containers, such as peanut butter jars or milk jugs.
- Protect your family.
  - No matter how safe you think the pesticide might be, **always keep it out of reach of children and pets**—not under the sink, in a low cabinet, or near food.
  - **NEVER allow children to handle pesticides.**
- Continue to use the other methods so that pests won't come back. Remember: The other methods are
  - Take away food, water, and shelter for pests.
  - Keep pests out.
  - Capture or kill pests without dangerous chemicals.

If anyone does swallow a pesticide,  
call Poison Control immediately at 1-800-222-1222  
(hearing impaired: 1-866-218-5372).

Introduce the activity. Post the Poison Control phone number near the phone. Before your visit, check with the Head Start office to see whether magnets, stickers, pens, or other items with Poison Control information are available to give to the learner.

Introduce the activity. Give the learner **Handout 2a: Always/never ways to control pests.**

Here's a little quiz to see what you know about safe ways to control pests. Some of the statements on the quiz are things you should always do. Other statements are things you should never do. Please put a checkmark in the correct column.

After the learner has completed the checklist, review it. Give the learner **Handout 2b: Always/never ways to control pests: Answer key.** Make sure that the learner understands all of the correct answers.

Distribute **Handout 3: Tips for common pests.** Explain that it gives more specific information about particular pests. If the family is having a problem with a particular pest, review the relevant information now. Otherwise, point out the pests that are covered in the handout and leave it as a reference for the family.

So far, we have talked in general about pests and ways to control them. This handout gives a little more specific information about particular pests.

Explain the homework to the learner. Distribute **Handout 4: My plan to control pests safely**. Ask the learner to create a plan to control any pests that the learner finds. Offer to help create this plan if the learner seems willing.

**Handout 4: My plan to control pests safely** lists the steps you can take to reduce pests in your home and make it a healthier place for your family.

#### Conclusion

Distribute **Handout 5: Tips for Controlling Pests Safely**, which summarizes this lesson.

Today we've talked about pests—about the health problems they cause and about safe ways to control them.

Do you think that you'll make any changes as a result of what we've talked about today?

**Note to trainer: Please write down any changes that the learner plans to make. We would like to track the learner's plans to help measure the effectiveness of this training.**

Introduce the activities for children. Distribute **Handout 6: Make a pest**, **Handout 7: Sing a pest song**, and **Handout 8: Poems and songs about pests**. Ask the learner to conduct one or more of these activities with the child.

We've emphasized that children must never handle pesticides, but children can help with some other ways to prevent pests—like putting leftovers in the refrigerator and clearing up their own clutter.

You can help your child learn about pests. There are three handouts of activities that you can do with your child. Follow the instructions on the handouts.

- Use **Handout 6: Make a pest** to help your child think about pests—how they might look, sound, move, and eat.<sup>2</sup>
- Use **Handout 7: Sing a pest song** to help your child practice or learn a familiar nursery rhyme and to think playfully about spiders.
- Use **Handout 8: Poems and songs about pests** to read to your child and talk about some common pests.

#### Evaluation

Please complete the **Home visitor's feedback and follow-up notes** after you have finished the lesson. You may wish to wait until your next visit to answer the follow-up questions about what changes the learner has made and what activities the learner has used with his or her children. Then return the form to the Family Services Coordinator.

#### Review

After you have completed this topic, you may want to review it with the learner during your next home visit. Ask what the learner remembers.

<sup>2</sup> This idea came from [http://pested.unl.edu/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=08fa2de1-8c25-4ff1-96fc-7a7e3e267a84&groupId=4093510&.pdf](http://pested.unl.edu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=08fa2de1-8c25-4ff1-96fc-7a7e3e267a84&groupId=4093510&.pdf)

During our last visit, we talked about controlling pests safely. Would you like to tell me what you remember about what we said?

See how much the learner recalls. You might remind the learner of the following information.

Here are four steps to controlling pests safely:

1. Take away their food, water, and shelter.
2. Keep pests out.
3. Capture or kill pests without dangerous chemicals.
4. Use chemicals if other methods fail, not as the first step.
  - a. If you need to use chemicals, use the safest ones possible for your problem pest.
  - b. Read and follow all directions carefully.
  - c. Keep all pesticides out of reach of children and pets.
  - d. NEVER allow children to handle pesticides.
  - e. If someone does swallow a pesticide, call Poison Control immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

Ask open-ended questions, such as the ones below. Make a note of any progress the learner has made or any questions the learner may have about this topic.

- How are you doing with controlling pests safely?
- Do you have any questions about this topic?
- Have you had an opportunity to do any of the activities with your child? If so, how did those go?

### Handout 1a: Remove the welcome mat for pests

Pests are not your guests.  
 Remove the welcome mat!  
 Take back the invitation to visit you!  
 Let them know they're not wanted!



One of the best ways to get rid of pests is to remove the food, water, and shelter they need to survive. Below are some actions you can take to help keep pests out of your home. See whether you can identify how the action takes away something the pest needs. Put a check mark in the column that best matches the reason for the action.

Action	Remove food	Remove water	Remove shelter
1. Clean up old newspapers on the floor			
2. Clean up spilled milk right away			
3. Dump water from outside toys			
4. Fix leaky pipes, or ask the property owner to do so			
5. Keep the garbage can covered			
6. Pick up dirty clothes from the floor and put in a laundry basket or hamper			
7. Put flour, cereal, rice, and grains into closed glass jars that pests can't get into			
8. Put leftover pizza in the refrigerator right away			
9. Take out the garbage at least once a day			
10. Wash dirty dishes as soon as you're finished eating			



### Handout 1b: Remove the welcome mat for pests: Answer key

Pests are not your guests.  
 Remove the welcome mat!  
 Take back the invitation to visit you!  
 Let them know they're not wanted!



One of the best ways to get rid of pests is to remove the food, water, and shelter they need to survive. Below are some actions you can take to help keep pests out of your home. See whether you can identify how the action takes away something the pest needs. Put a check mark in the column that best matches the reason for the action.

Action	Remove food	Remove water	Remove shelter
1. Clean up old newspapers on the floor			✓
2. Clean up spilled milk right away	✓		
3. Dump water from outside toys		✓	
4. Fix leaky pipes, or ask the property owner to do so		✓	
5. Keep the garbage can covered	✓		
6. Pick up dirty clothes from the floor and put in a laundry basket or hamper			✓
7. Put flour, cereal, rice, and grains into closed glass jars that pests can't get into	✓		
8. Put leftover pizza in the refrigerator right away	✓		
9. Take out the garbage at least once a day	✓		
10. Wash dirty dishes as soon as you're finished eating	✓		

## Handout 2a      Always/never ways to control pests

Some of the statements below are things you should **always** do. Other statements are things you should **never** do. Put a check mark (✓) in the correct column.




	Always	Never
Ways to control pests without pesticides		
1. First try to control pests with methods that don't contain poison		
2. Leave the garbage can uncovered to allow air to circulate		
3. Empty the garbage can frequently		
4. Fix leaky pipes to keep pests from having water		
5. Leave food scraps on the kitchen counter overnight		
6. Clean up clutter to remove places for pests to hide		
Ways to use pesticides safely		
7. Use strong pesticides as your first effort to control pests		
8. If possible, buy only as much pesticide as you need at one time		
9. Keep pesticides in their original containers		
10. Store pesticides under the kitchen sink		
11. Read and follow label directions on all pesticides		
12. Store leftover pesticides in a clean, empty milk jug		
13. Store leftover pesticides in a clean, empty peanut butter jar		
14. Allow children to handle pesticides		
15. Call the Poison Control Center right away if anyone swallows even a little pesticide		


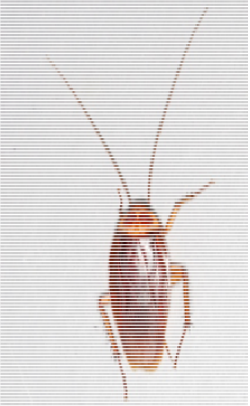
## Handout 2b Always/never ways to control pests: Answer key




Some of the statements below are things you should **always** do. Other statements are things you should **never** do. Put a check mark (✓) in the correct column.




	Always	Never
Ways to control pests without pesticides		
1. First try to control pests with methods that don't contain poison	✓	
2. Leave the garbage can uncovered to allow air to circulate		✓
3. Empty the garbage can frequently	✓	
4. Fix leaky pipes to keep pests from having water	✓	
5. Leave food scraps on the kitchen counter overnight		✓
6. Clean up clutter to remove places for pests to hide	✓	
Ways to use pesticides safely		
7. Use strong pesticides as your first effort to control pests		✓
8. If possible, buy only as much pesticide as you need at one time	✓	
9. Keep pesticides in their original containers	✓	
10. Store pesticides under the kitchen sink		✓
11. Read and follow label directions on all pesticides	✓	
12. Store leftover pesticides in a clean, empty milk jug		✓
13. Store leftover pesticides in a clean, empty peanut butter jar		✓
14. Allow children to handle pesticides		✓
15. Call the Poison Control Center right away if anyone swallows even a little pesticide	✓	



### Handout 3 Tips for Common Pests

Pest	Health effects	What it eats	Where it lives	How to prevent
<p><b>Ants</b></p> 	<p>Many common ants do not carry diseases, but they can contaminate our food with their filth</p>	<p>Wide variety, including living and dead insects, grease, and sugary foods</p>	<p>Often live near moisture, in wall and floor cracks, in logs and debris, in soil, under stones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get rid of standing water</li> <li>• Seal cracks around the bottom of your home and around pipes coming into your home and under sinks</li> <li>• Store opened food in covered containers</li> <li>• Put away leftover food, and clean dirty dishes</li> <li>• Store firewood away from your house</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bats</b> Can be helpful because they eat many insect pests</p> 	<p>Can carry rabies, a very serious disease that is fatal if not treated right away</p>	<p>Insects, including flies and mosquitoes</p>	<p>In houses (especially attics), barns, or other buildings, in trees or caves, or under bridges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seal any openings larger than ¼ inch where bats could enter from outside (or ask the property owner to do so)</li> <li>• Teach children never to touch a bat if they find one. (Easily captured bats may be sick, so adults should not touch it either.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bedbugs</b> Small and hard to see</p> 	<p>Although their bites can become red and itchy, they do not carry diseases</p>	<p>Human blood</p>	<p>Often hide in mattress seams, other padded or stuffed furniture, floor cracks, or behind wallpaper (in homes and hotels/motels)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't bring home mattresses or padded furniture that has been left at the curb or on the street.</li> <li>• When you travel, keep your suitcases in a big plastic bag and off the floor so you don't bring pests home with you. Put your suitcase into the dry bathtub.</li> </ul>

Pest	Health effects	What it eats	Where it lives	How to prevent
<p><b>Clothes moths</b></p> 		<p>Fibers (especially wool), and food stains, perspiration, and oils left on clothing</p>	<p>Closets, dressers, boxes of clothing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean your clothes before you store them</li> <li>• Hang cedar chips in closets to keep clothes moths away</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cockroaches</b> Usually come out at night</p> 	<p>Can spread disease by bringing germs into our homes Can contaminate food with their skin and waste Can trigger allergies and asthma attacks</p>	<p>Just about anything</p>	<p>Warm, dark, wet places, such as basements, around pipes and drains, under sinks, and food cabinets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate places where they live (stacks of cardboard, paper bags, and clutter in warm, moist locations)</li> <li>• Empty garbage cans often, especially in the evening</li> <li>• Keep areas where you cook, eat, and store food very clean and dry</li> <li>• Store food in the refrigerator, not on the counter, or in covered containers</li> <li>• Empty your refrigerator defrost pan often</li> <li>• Put out roach bait or sticky traps, especially behind the stove and refrigerator, and replace them when they are full</li> <li>• Keep all traps away from children and pets</li> </ul>

Pest	Health effects	What it eats	Where it lives	How to prevent
<p><b>Fleas</b> Usually come into the home on a pet dog or cat, or in stuffed furniture</p> 	<p>Bites are painful and itchy Can carry serious diseases (like bubonic plague) Can cause allergic reactions</p>	<p>Blood</p>	<p>On people, cats, dogs, rats  Also on clothing, shoes, blankets, stuffed furniture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacuum floors, rugs, carpets, furniture, mattresses, and box springs regularly</li> <li>• Seal the vacuum cleaner bag in plastic, and place the bag in an outdoor trashcan</li> <li>• Wash pet and human bedding, including pillows, in hot water and soap or detergent</li> <li>• Keep yard clean of garbage and pet droppings</li> <li>• Ask veterinarian about preventive treatment for your pet</li> </ul>
<p><b>House flies</b></p> 	<p>Can carry many diseases</p>	<p>Wet or decaying matter, such as pet waste</p>	<p>Garbage cans, compost, pet areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair (or ask the property owner to repair) any holes in window and door screens</li> <li>• Teach children to close doors promptly</li> <li>• Clean up areas that flies like, such as piles of garbage and pet areas</li> <li>• Don't leave leftover food or dirty dishes lying around</li> <li>• Hang sticky flypaper from the ceiling, and keep a fly swatter handy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indian meal moths</b></p> 	<p>Their skin and waste can contaminate food</p>	<p>Dried fruits, flour, grains, seeds, nuts, chocolate, candy, bird seed, dog food, powdered milk, and dried red peppers</p>	<p>Bright places where food is stored, such as grocery stores and restaurants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check food from grocery store before you put it away</li> <li>• Store food in glass or plastic containers with tightly closed lids</li> <li>• Throw away infested foods in outdoor trashcan</li> <li>• Vacuum infested cabinets thoroughly and wash with soap and water</li> </ul>

Pest	Health effects	What it eats	Where it lives	How to prevent
<p><b>Mice</b></p> 	<p>Can trigger allergies Can spread disease by biting and by contaminating food and water with their waste</p>	<p>Almost anything—plants, meat, dairy products</p>	<p>Indoors or outdoors, especially dark places where they won't be disturbed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your home as clean as possible</li> <li>• Do not leave food out</li> <li>• Empty garbage cans often</li> <li>• Close all holes in foundation that are larger than ¼ inch in diameter, especially around pipes and doors</li> <li>• Store woodpiles away from the home</li> <li>• Put snap traps or glue board where mice might hide: in closets, behind the refrigerator or stove, or in cabinets</li> <li>• Keep all traps away from children and pets</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mosquitoes</b> Busiest at dawn and dusk</p> 	<p>Not only produce itchy bites but also serious diseases, like West Nile virus</p>	<p>Nectar and blood</p>	<p>Soft, moist soil or standing water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove standing water, which is often found in garbage cans, rain gutters, old tires, buckets, sandbox toys, and potted plant saucers</li> <li>• Keep window and door screens tight and in place until winter</li> <li>• Replace outdoor light bulbs with yellow “bug” lights, which are less attractive to mosquitoes than regular white bulbs</li> <li>• Note that bug zappers don't work against biting pests but actually kill harmless or helpful insects</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rats</b></p> 	<p>Can bite people especially babies Can carry serious diseases (bubonic plague, hantavirus) Their waste can contaminate our food Can chew electric wires and start fires</p>	<p>Almost anything—including cereal, meat, fish, nuts, vegetables, and fruit</p>	<p>Indoors—often in basements or attics—and outdoors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not leave food out</li> <li>• Keep home, especially places where you store food, clean and dry</li> <li>• Close up small holes and cracks where rats can enter, especially around pipes and doors</li> </ul>

Pest	Health effects	What it eats	Where it lives	How to prevent
<p><b>Spiders</b> Many spiders are actually helpful, because they eat other pests</p> 	<p>Most spider bites cause moderate problems, like itching, redness, swelling, and sometimes pain Only a few spiders are poisonous</p>	<p>Insects, including flies and cockroaches</p>	<p>Indoors and outdoors, especially in basements, garages, porches, and other sheltered areas where they will not be disturbed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean up clutter inside and around the outside of the house</li> <li>• Seal cracks and holes around the foundation (or ask the property owner to do so)</li> <li>• If you see a spider indoors, try to scoop it into a jar and take it outside</li> <li>• If that isn't possible, vacuum up the spider</li> <li>• Or hit it with a fly swatter</li> <li>• Vacuum or sweep regularly, especially windows, corners of rooms, storage areas, and basements</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ticks</b></p> 	<p>Can pass on Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and other diseases</p>	<p>Human and animal blood</p>	<p>Grass and shrubs Leaves and debris</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep grassy areas mowed</li> <li>• Wear light-colored clothing outdoors</li> <li>• Tuck pant legs into socks</li> <li>• After spending time outdoors, check your children and yourself, especially the hairline, back, arms, and legs</li> <li>• If you have pets, check them for ticks, too, because pets can carry ticks into your home</li> </ul>



### Handout 4      My plan to control pests safely

Here's an outline of a plan to control pests. Put a check mark next to each step when you have completed it.

	<b>What actions I can take</b>	<b>When I can do it</b>	<b>Check (✓) when it's done</b>
1. Look for signs of pests			
2. Identify any pest found			
3. Take away the pest's food			
4. Take away the pest's water			
5. Take away the pest's shelter			
6. Keep pests out			
7. Capture or kill pests without dangerous chemicals			
8. Use pesticides safely (after reading the label carefully) and only when all other methods fail			

## Handout 5      Tips for controlling pests safely

### Look for signs of pests

- The pests themselves—dead or alive
- Droppings, hair, nests, or tracks
- Damage from gnawing on walls, wires, food, food packages, or newspapers
- Rows of red bite marks on the skin from bedbugs

Try to identify any pests you find. It's easier to get rid of a pest if you know what the pest is.

### 1. Take away the things pests need to live

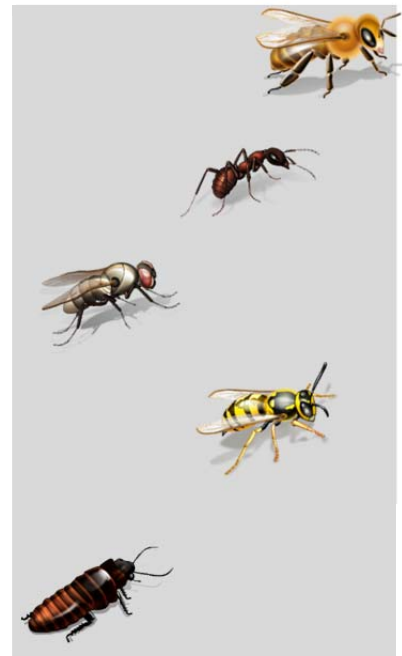
- Food
  - Clean up kitchen counters and shelves
  - Wash dirty dishes promptly
  - Take out trash every day
  - Store food in strong, covered containers
- Water
  - Repair leaks promptly
  - Clean up spilled water right away
- Shelter
  - Clear away clutter where pests can live

### 2. Keep pests out

- Seal cracks and openings in floors or walls

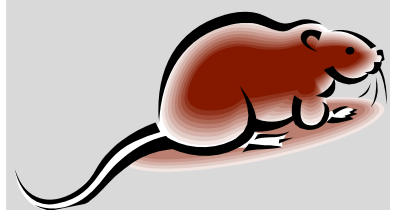
### 3. Get rid of pests

- Capture or kill pests without dangerous chemicals
  - Try sticky traps or boric acid
  - Swat flying pests or stomp crawling pests instead of using pesticide sprays
- Use pesticides only when all other methods fail
  - Use very carefully
  - Read the labels and follow the directions
  - **Always keep pesticides out of reach of children**



There's nothing  
here to eat or  
drink,  
and no place to  
hide.

We're leaving!



## Handout 6      Activity for children: Make a pest

### Instructions for adults

Use this handout to help your child think about pests—how they might look, sound, move, and eat. To prepare your child for the activity, start by explaining what a pest is.

- A pest is any animal or plant that lives where it's not wanted. A pest bothers you or harms you in some way.
- Some pests, like bees and mosquitoes, can hurt you by stinging or biting. Some pests, like ticks, can bite and make you sick. Some pests, like fleas that may live on your dog or cat, can make you itch.

Ask your child to name some other pests.

Can you name some other pests?

If necessary, give some examples that your child might be familiar with, such as mice, roaches, flies, wasps, or mosquitoes. If necessary, explain that brothers, sisters, other relatives, or neighbors are **not** the kinds of pests we're talking about.

Explain that we can get rid of pests safely.

Pests need food, water, and shelter to live. To get rid of pests, we can

- Take away their food, water, and shelter
- Keep them out of the house by blocking the ways they come in
- Find animals that eat them (for example, ladybugs and dragonflies eat some other bugs, bats and frogs eat flies and mosquitoes)
- Capture them in traps
- Stomp or swat them

Tell your child that he or she going to create his or her own pest. Explain that your child can make up any kind of pest that he or she likes. Provide various kinds of paper, fabric, felt, child safety scissors, pens and pencils, crayons, markers, pencils, glue, sticky tape, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, buttons, paper cups, or similar arts and crafts supplies.

After your child has finished, ask him or her to tell you about the pest. If your child needs help talking about the pest, ask some or all of the questions below, or make up your own questions.

Tell me about your pest.

- What's the name of your pest?
- Where does it live?
- What does it like to eat?
- What does it look like?
- What color is it?
- How big is it?
- How many legs does it have? How many arms? How many wings? How many fingers or toes?
- How many eyes does it have? How many ears? How many noses? How many mouths?
- Does it have a tail? If so, is the tail short or long? Fat or skinny?

- Is the pest furry, hairy, feathery, smooth, or slimy?
- What would it feel like if you touched it?
- How does it move? Does it walk, run, crawl, slither, slide, squirm, fly, flutter, or swim? Does it move fast or slow?
- Does it make any sounds?
- What makes it a pest? For example, does it bite, sting, make you itch, or make you sick?
- How could you get rid of this pest if it came into your house? Try not to use pest spray. Instead, think about ways you could
  - Keep it from getting inside
  - Take away its food, water, and shelter
  - Find an animal that eats it
  - Capture it in a trap
  - Stomp or swat it

You might also ask your child to act like his or her pest—for example, moving, hiding, eating, or making sounds.

You might also ask your child to make up a story, a poem, or a song about the pest.

Next, encourage your child to become a real pest detective. Explain that he or she has been talking about a **pretend** pest. Ask what the child should do if he or she sees a **real** pest.

We've been talking a lot about your pretend pest. What do you think you should do about real pests?

Ask the questions below. Make sure that your child understands the correct answers. Make sure that your child also understands that he or she should **never** touch any pesticide (such as bug spray or bait traps). Those chemicals are for grownups only to handle.

Question: What should you do if you see a pest, like a mouse or a bug, in your house?

Answer: Tell a grownup.

Question: What should you do if you see mouse poop or bird poop in your house?

Answer: Tell a grownup.

Question: What should you do if you see a leaky faucet, which can give pests water to drink?

Answer: Tell a grownup.

Question: What should you do if you see food that pests like, such as leftovers or dirty dishes with food scraps, lying around?

Answer: Ask a grownup if you can help clear away the pest food.

Question: What should you do if you see clutter—places where pests could hide—like newspapers or dirty clothes on the floor?

Answer: Ask a grownup if you can help clear away the clutter.

Question: What should you do if your toys or clothes are cluttering the floor?

Answer: Put them away where they belong!

## Handout 7      Activity for children: Sing a pest song

### Instructions for adults

Use this handout to teach your child the *Itsy Bitsy Spider* song (also called the *Eensy Weensy Spider* song) or to practice it, if your child already knows the song.

Prepare your child for the activity. Start by talking about spiders.

Spiders are not usually bad animals. In fact, they're actually helpful, because they eat pests, like flies.

However, we don't want spiders in our homes. If you see a spider, the best thing to do is to tell a grownup. The grownup can decide whether to try to capture the spider and put it outside or whether to do something else.

If your child doesn't already know the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" Song, teach it now, along with hand gestures.

Words	Hand gestures
The itsy bitsy spider Climbed up the waterspout.	Make climbing fingers: Touch the tip of your left index (pointer) finger to the tip of your right thumb, and touch the tip of your right index finger to the tip of your left thumb. While keeping one finger tip and thumb tip touching, swing the other pair up to touch each other again. Repeat this climbing motion going up the waterspout.
Down came the rain And washed the spider out.	Sprinkle the fingers of both hands downward, from your head to your waist, as if they were falling rain drops.  Throw your arms out to the side.
Out came the sun And dried up all the rain.	Raise your hands above your head, and make a circle to show the sun.
And the itsy bitsy spider Climbed up the spout again	Repeat the climbing fingers.

Here's another verse.<sup>3</sup> Explain what the verse means.

The second verse explains that baby spiders use special tubes called *spinnerets* to produce silk threads. They use these threads to make balloons to ride the wind, sometimes for thousands of feet. This ability helps them move away to find new places to live, where there is more food.

The itsy bitsy spider  
Stuck out two spinnerets  
Out came a web  
Made up of tiny threads.

Along came the wind  
That blew so far away  
Where the itsy-bitsy spider found  
A brand new place to play!

Encourage your child to make up his or her own hand gestures to go with the second verse.

Ask your child if he or she would like to make up other verses to the song. For example, a verse might start:

The giant friendly spider went up the waterspout...

The very hungry spider went up the waterspout...

You can extend this activity.

A wonderful book about a spider and a pig that you might like to read to your child is *Charlotte's Web*, by E. B. White. Check to see whether your library has a copy.

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<sup>3</sup> Author: Dean Naston, <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/lyrics/spider.htm>.

## Handout 8 Activity for children: Poems and songs about pests

### Instructions for adults

Use this handout to read to your child. Before you read each poem or song, tell your child why the creature is a pest. After you read each one, ask your child to draw a picture of the story.

Talk to your child about bats. Then read the poems and ask your child to draw pictures of the stories.

Bats are often very helpful outside, because they eat lots of mosquitoes and other insects. But we don't want them in our homes because they might bite us and make us sick.

### Little Bat

Small and furry, little bat,  
Fly through the sky at night.  
Listen, listen, little bat.  
As echoes guide your flight.

Swoop and dive, little bat,  
Catch insects as you fly.  
Hurry, hurry, little bat,  
Back to your home nearby.

Snug and warm, little bat,  
Toes hold the ceiling light.  
Sleepy, sleepy, little bat,  
Wrapped in your wings until night



### Five Little Bats

Five little bats came flying in the door,  
One flew away, and then there were four.

Four little bats were hiding in a tree,  
One flew away, and then there were three.

Three little bats were wondering what to do,  
One flew away, and then there were two.

Two little bats were hiding from the sun,  
One flew away, and then there was one.

One little bat was hanging all alone,  
He flew away, and then there were none.

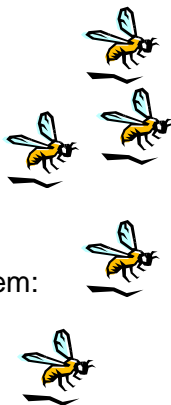
Talk your child about bees. Then read the poems and ask your child to draw pictures of the stories.

Bees are very helpful outside, because they make honey and help make new flowers. But we don't want bees in our homes because they might sting us.

### Beehive

Here is a beehive,  
But where are the bees?  
They're hiding inside  
Where nobody sees.

Now they come creeping  
Out of the hive.  
Watch them and count them:  
One, two, three, four, five.



### Honeybees

Five busy honeybees were resting in the sun.  
The first one said, "Let's have some fun."

The second one said, "Where shall it be?"  
The third one said, "In the honey tree."

The fourth one said, "Let's make some honey  
sweet."  
The fifth one said, "With pollen on our feet."

The five busy bees sang their buzzing tune,  
As they worked in the beehive all afternoon.

Buzz! Buzz! Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!

Talk your child about ladybugs. Then read the poems and ask your child to draw pictures of the stories.

Ladybugs are really helpful outside, because they eat other bugs. But we don't want any bugs living in our homes.

### Five Little Ladybugs

Five little ladybugs climbing up a door  
One flew away, and then there were four.

Two little ladybugs looking for some fun,  
One flew away, and then there was one.

Four little ladybugs sitting on a tree  
One flew away, and then there were three.

One little ladybug sitting in the sun  
She flew away, and then there were none.

Three little ladybugs landed on a shoe  
One flew away, and then there were two.



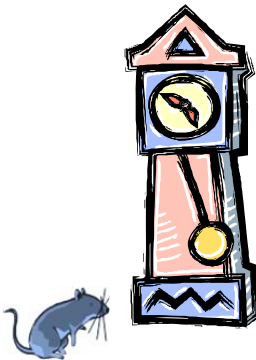
Talk your child about mice. Then read the poem and ask your child to draw a picture of the story.

Mice might be cute, but they can carry germs into our homes, eat our food, and make people with asthma sick. We don't want mice living in our homes.

### Hickory Dickory Dock

Hickory, dickory, dock,  
The mouse ran up the clock.  
The clock struck one,  
The mouse ran down,  
Hickory, dickory, dock.

Hickory, dickory dock,  
The mouse ran up the clock.  
The clock struck two,  
The mouse said "Boo,"  
Hickory dickory dock.



Hickory dickory dock,  
The mouse ran up the clock.  
The clock struck three,  
The mouse went "Weeee,"  
Hickory dickory dock.

Hickory dickory dock,  
The mouse ran up the clock.  
The clock struck four,  
Lets sing some more,  
Hickory dickory dock



## Home visitor’s feedback and follow-up notes

- Please fill in this form after you have completed the lesson and observed any follow-up activities. This training is a pilot program, and the course developers welcome your comments and suggestions on how to improve it.
- Please make a copy of this form, and give the copy to the Family Services Coordinator to forward to the developers. Please place the original in the child’s file.

Learner’s response to this lesson						
Did the learner find the topic	Please check the box that most closely applies					
	Interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boring
	Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to understand
	Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useless
Please summarize the learner’s plans to make changes as a result of this topic.						
Please identify any questions the learner had that were <b>not</b> covered in the topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please summarize any changes the learner actually made as a result of this topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please list the activities that the learner did with his or her child and any comments about those activities.						
Your feedback on this lesson						
What was the most useful part of this lesson?						
What was the least useful part of this lesson?						
Do you have any suggestions for improving this lesson? For example, was the lesson too long or too short, with too much information or not enough information?						
Additional comments						

Your name:

Date:

Topic: Pests

## Healthy Homes/Healthy Kids

### Smoking<sup>1</sup>

#### Notes

1. This lesson is designed mainly for learners who smoke or whose family members smoke. It may also be useful if the learner's children spend time around other people who smoke (such as relatives, family friends, or babysitters) or at the homes of smokers. Select the parts of the lesson that are appropriate for the family.
2. This topic discusses smoking because it is the most common problem. But no form of tobacco and similar products—including smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco or snuff), filtered cigarettes, low-tar or low-nicotine cigarettes, e-cigarettes (electronic cigarettes), candy-flavored cigarettes (bidis), clove cigarettes, and water pipes (hookahs)—has been shown to be safe.

#### Background information for trainers

There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco. Any exposure—even an occasional cigarette or exposure to second-hand smoke—is harmful.

#### **1** *Smoking (first-hand smoke)*

Smoking—whether a cigarette, cigar, or pipe—begins doing damage immediately. The longer someone smokes, the greater the risk for serious damage. Smoking harms almost every organ in the body. It is associated with an increased risk of many diseases, including many types of cancer.

Cancers associated with smoking	Other diseases associated with smoking
Bladder	Asthma
Cervix	Cardiovascular diseases (including high blood pressure, stroke, aneurysms)
Esophagus (tube from the throat to the stomach)	Cataracts
Kidney	Diabetes
Larynx (voice box)	Gum disease
Lung	Heart disease
Mouth, tongue, lips, and throat	Reduced fertility
Pancreas	Respiratory diseases (including asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and pneumonia)
Some forms of leukemia	Stomach ulcers
Stomach	Stroke
Uterus	

- Smoking is associated with reproductive problems too.

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Errol Roberts, Connecticut Department of Public Health, for his helpful suggestions on this topic.

- Women who smoke or who are exposed to second-hand smoke may have difficulty getting pregnant.
- Smoking may damage the DNA in men's sperm, which could lead to fertility problems, birth defects, or miscarriages.
- Smoking makes people less attractive: it causes wrinkled skin, yellow teeth, bad breath, and smelly clothing and hair
- Smoking causes loss of bone density, and less resistance to cold or flu.
- Smoking makes it harder to people with diabetes to control their blood sugar.

Many people who want to quit smoking have a hard time doing so because smoking is addictive. Tobacco contains the addictive drug nicotine, which makes a smoker both mentally and physically dependent on smoking. It quickly becomes a very difficult habit to break.

## **2** *Second-hand smoke*

Most people who smoke know that it is bad for their health, but they may not realize that smoking is also bad for the people around them. The people around them are exposed to second-hand smoke (also called *environmental tobacco smoke*). People are exposed to second-hand smoke whenever they are near someone smoking—in their homes, cars, or public places.

Second-hand smoke includes

1. The smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe
2. The smoke that a smoker breathes out

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), second-hand smoke is responsible for almost 50,000 deaths per year.

- Second-hand smoke contains the same dangerous chemicals that direct smoke contains. In fact, it contains more than 7,000 chemicals. At least 250 of these chemicals are known to be harmful, and 70 of them cause cancer.
- The chemicals found in tobacco smoke get into a person's lungs and then into the bloodstream, which carries them to all parts of the body.
- Most of the same diseases that affect smokers affect children and nonsmokers who are exposed to second-hand smoke.
- Second-hand smoke can cause disease and earlier death in children and adults who do not smoke.

If a pregnant woman smokes, her baby smokes too. The smoker increases the risk to her baby of

- Stillbirth and miscarriage
- Low birth weight
- Premature birth (being born too early)
- Damage to the lungs (and later risk of developing asthma, pneumonia, bronchitis, and middle ear infections)
- Damage to the brain (and later risk of learning disabilities, behavior problems [such as attention deficit disorder, or ADD], and reduced intelligence [IQ])
- Birth defects
- Death from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS (the unexpected death of a healthy child under the age of one year).

Children who are exposed to second-hand smoke get sick more often. They are at greater risk of developing

- Respiratory problems, including asthma, wheezing, coughing, pneumonia, bronchitis, and allergies
- Ear infections
- Death from SIDS
- Becoming a smoker later in life

Adults who are exposed to second-hand smoke are also at increased risk of serious health problems, such as

- Heart disease (including heart attacks)
- Lung cancer
- Other cancers
- Stroke

To protect people from second-hand smoke, Connecticut law bans smoking in all restaurants, cafes, bars, schools, public buildings, retail food stores, and most workplaces.

### **3** *Third-hand smoke*

Doctors have recently identified a new danger from smoking: third-hand smoke. Third-hand smoke consists of chemicals from tobacco smoke that stay behind on a smoker's hair, skin, and clothing, or chemicals that remain on surfaces like walls, floors, rugs, furniture, dust, and car interiors. It's the reason you can often smell smoke on a smoker's hair or clothing long after she has put out her cigarette.

Third-hand smoke can remain for hours or even days after a cigarette has been put out and after second-hand smoke has disappeared from the air.

Third-hand smoke builds up on surfaces, as one cigarette follows another. Because it sticks to surfaces and becomes embedded in things like sofas and rugs, it's difficult to clean. It can't be eliminated by airing out a room, opening windows, using fans or air conditioners, or restricting smoking to certain rooms. Although smoking outside is better than smoking inside, the chemicals still stick to a smoker's skin and clothing and come back into the home with the smoker.

Babies and young children can be exposed to third-hand smoke in various ways.

- If they get these chemicals on their hands—from something as common as crawling on the floor, for example—and then put their hands in their mouths, they could swallow these harmful substances.
- If they mouth surfaces (like toys) that are coated with these chemicals, they can swallow them.
- If they breathe dust that is coated with these chemicals, they can inhale them.
- If the smoker picks up the baby, the chemicals on the smoker's clothing, hair, or skin can transfer to the baby.
- The chemicals can interact with other chemicals in the air and become airborne again, where someone can breathe them in.

### *Teens and smoking*

Most adults who smoke started smoking as teenagers. People who started smoking before the age of 21 have the hardest time quitting.

Teens are more likely to smoke if they have

- Lower socioeconomic status
- Lower levels of school achievement
- Fewer skills to resist pressure to smoke from advertising, promotion campaigns, and peers
- Friends who smoke
- Lower self-image or self-esteem

Teens who smoke face the same health risks as adults. However, they are even more sensitive to nicotine. Teen smokers may especially be disturbed by these problems:

- Unhealthy-looking skin
- Bad breath
- Bad-smelling hair and clothes
- Less energy
- Worse performance in sports
- Greater risk of injury and slower healing
- Greater risk of illness (especially respiratory illnesses like colds, flu, bronchitis, and pneumonia)
- Greater risk of poor nutrition
- Cost: smoking is expensive

Some teens may be more likely to quit smoking if they learn about the effects of second-hand smoke on others.

### ***Smoking and home safety***

Besides causing many illnesses, smoking is the leading cause of deaths from home fires. Most of these fires are caused by lighted cigarettes, although matches and lighters also represent a major source of fires.

Of course, the best way to prevent these fires is not to smoke. But if people do smoke, here are some safety precautions:

- Smoke “fire-safe” cigarettes. (Most cigarettes sold in the United States are fire-safe.)
- Smoke outside.
- Collect ashes and cigarette butts in deep, sturdy ashtrays that are hard to tip over or in a can filled with sand.
  - Put the ashtrays on something sturdy that will not easily catch on fire (like a table).
  - Don’t put ashtrays on sofas and chairs that can catch on fire fast and burn fast.
- Before you throw out cigarette butts and ashes, make sure they are **completely** out.
  - Either soak them in water or stub them out in sand.
  - Never toss hot cigarette butts or ashes into the trash.
- Check under furniture cushions and in other places where people smoke for cigarette butts that may have fallen out of sight.
- Do not smoke when you are sleepy, have been drinking, or have taken medicine or other drugs that prevent you from being alert.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Never smoke in a home where oxygen is used, even if the oxygen is turned off.
- Make sure that your home has working smoke alarms.

### **Quitting smoking**

Once people decide to quit smoking, they can talk to their doctor about various methods, including nicotine replacement therapy or medication, or they can contact a support program. Many people find it easier to quit with the help of a support system.

If your learners are smokers, some may have tried to quit several times, but because smoking is addictive, they may not have succeeded. They may be well aware of the damaging effects of smoking on their health, but they may not be aware that they are damaging the health of their family members, especially babies and children.

This lesson is designed to help learners identify the harmful health effects of tobacco smoke, develop a plan to keep second-hand and third-hand smoke from affecting their family, and know what to do once they decide to quit smoking.

### **Resources for trainers**

#### **For children**

Brenneman, Tim C. 2001. *Jimmy Boogie Learns about Smoking*. 3d edition. Grand Unification Press.

Clarke, Jane. 2003. *Smoky Dragons*. Little Tiger Press.

Cosby, Eileen Tucker. 2004. *"N" is for NO SMOKING...Please*. (Our KidsPak) SwakPac.

Gosselin, Kim. 2002. *Smoking Stinks*. JayJo Books.

#### **For adults**

American Lung Association, <http://www.lungusa.org/stop-smoking>

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights, <http://www.no-smoke.org>

Connecticut Department of Public Health, Connecticut Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, a free telephone service that offers information, counseling, nicotine replacement therapy (such as patches, gum, and lozenges), and nonjudgmental support for quitting tobacco. Quit coaches help callers to create a personalized quit plan and can refer them to local programs. The line is open 7 days a week and is available in English, Spanish, and some other languages.

National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, *Harms of Smoking and Health Benefits of Quitting*, <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/ccessation/print>  
----- Tobacco Control Research Branch, <http://smokefree.gov>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, Care for Their Air: Promoting Smoke-Free Homes and Cars for Head Start Families, [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/Health/Health%20and%20Wellness/Health%20and%20Wellness%20Program%20Staff/health\\_to\\_12408\\_040607.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/Health/Health%20and%20Wellness/Health%20and%20Wellness%20Program%20Staff/health_to_12408_040607.html)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, Report of the Surgeon General, 2010, *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease*,  
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/tobaccosmoke/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Care for Their Air: Promoting Smoke-free Homes for Head Start Families*, <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/headstart>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Smoke-free Homes and Cars Program,  
<http://www.epa.gov/smokefree/healtheffects.html>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration, cigarette health warnings,  
<http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/Labeling/CigaretteWarningLabels/default.htm>

## Lesson Plan: Smoking

### Learning objectives

At the end of this topic learners will be able to

- Recognize the dangers of smoking tobacco, second-hand smoke, and third-hand smoke
- Name five health effects associated with smoking
- Describe the dangers of second-hand smoke
- Describe the dangers of third-hand smoke
- List five reasons to quit smoking
- List five ways to protect their family from exposure to second-hand and third-hand smoke
- Identify three ways to help themselves or a family member quit smoking

### Materials you'll need for this lesson

- Copies of handouts
- Pens or pencils

### For children's activity

- Colored pencils, pens, crayons, or markers

Start with a review of the previous week's topic. See that topic for review suggestions.

Introduce the new topic: smoking tobacco.

Today I'd like to talk with you about smoking tobacco products. I'd like to talk about three things: (1) how smoking affects the smoker, (2) how smoking affects the people near the smoker, and (3) how the chemicals leftover from smoking affect people.

I'll start with how smoking affects the person who actually smokes—whether it's a cigarette, a cigar, or a pipe.

Ask.

Do you know why smoking any of these tobacco products is bad for your health?

Give the learner a few moments to answer, and then explain.

Tobacco smoke contains thousands of chemicals. Many of them are very harmful. Among other things, cigarette smoke contains

- Ammonia, a toilet cleaner
- Arsenic, a rat poison
- Carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas
- Formaldehyde, embalming fluid
- Hydrogen cyanide, a poison used in gas chambers
- Methane, sewer gas
- Nicotine, a poisonous insecticide

When you smoke, these chemicals and others get into your body. Since so many of them are poisonous, it's not surprising that they cause a lot of damage.



In addition, nicotine is **addictive**, which makes it very difficult for many smokers to quit once they have started smoking. Nicotine affects the brain and makes the smoker feel good for a little while, but when the nicotine effect wears off, the smoker craves more.

If you've ever tried to stop smoking (or been around someone else who has tried), you may recognize the symptoms of withdrawal from nicotine: the person may be irritable, anxious, depressed, confused, or unable to sleep. The person may also have headaches, cold symptoms, or stomach problems.

Here's the good news: If the person succeeds in quitting, these symptoms do go away. We'll talk more about quitting in a little while.

If the learner smokes, distribute **Handout 1: How does smoking affect you?**

Let's talk about some of the health effects of cigarette smoking. Please look at **Handout 1: How does smoking affect you?** Imagine that you are the person in the picture.

How do you think you would feel about smoking if you were sick with one of the diseases listed?

Do you think that smoking is worth the risk of these diseases?

**Explain.**

The list of problems that smoking causes or makes worse goes on and on. Here are just some of them:

- Cancer—not just lung cancer, but cancer almost anywhere in your body, such as your mouth, lips, throat, bladder, kidneys, pancreas, and cervix
- COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which makes it difficult to breathe. COPD includes
  - Emphysema (causing shortness of breath)
  - Chronic bronchitis (causing coughing with a lot of mucus)
- Blood clots that can stop the blood flow to your heart, brain, or legs
- Increased risk of chest pain, heart attack, and stroke
- Setting off an asthma attack—not only in the smokers but also in the people around them
- High blood pressure
- Fertility problems (problems getting pregnant)
- If you have diabetes, increased risk of heart or kidney disease, eye disease, nerve damage, and gangrene (resulting in amputation)
- Affects how you look:
  - Makes your skin look pale or unhealthy
  - Can turn your teeth yellow
  - Raises the risk of gum disease
  - Gives you bad breath
  - Makes you more likely to develop wrinkles

**Emphasize the danger of smoking while pregnant.**

Smoking is especially dangerous for pregnant women, because it affects their unborn children. If you smoke while you are pregnant, your baby has a great chance of

- Being stillborn
- Being born too early
- Having a low birth weight (less than 5 ½ pounds)
- Dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS (the sudden death of a baby under one year old)
- Having birth defects, such as cleft lip or palate

Distribute **Handout 2a: Which messages make me want to quit smoking?** (with English warning messages) or **Handout 2b** (with Spanish warning messages).

You may have heard that cigarette packages will soon carry new warning labels because the U.S. government wants people to better understand the dangers of smoking. Please look at the nine new labels on **Handout 2: Which messages make me want to quit smoking?** Think about which ones (if any) make you want to quit smoking. Write down or talk about why.

If you can think of any ways to make these labels more effective, write down or talk about them.

Introduce the topic of second-hand smoke.

We've talked about how bad smoking is for the person who actually smokes. But smoking affects other people too. Anyone who is around a person who is smoking is exposed to *second-hand smoke* (also called *passive smoke*, or *environmental tobacco smoke* [ETS]).

Second-hand smoke is the smoke from the burning end of the cigarette, cigar, or pipe, as well as the smoke that a smoker breathes out.

Do you know why smoking is bad for the people around you? Take the quiz on **Handout 3a: How does smoking affect nonsmokers?** to see how much you already know.

Distribute **Handout 3a: How does smoking affect nonsmokers?** Give the learner a few minutes to answer the quiz. Then distribute **Handout 3b: How does smoking affect nonsmokers? Answer key.** Review the correct answers with the learner.

Explain.

Every time nonsmokers are near someone who is smoking—whether in their homes, in their cars, or in public places—they can be exposed to second-hand smoke. Babies, children, and the elderly are particularly sensitive to this smoke.

Let's look at some of the ways that second-hand smoke can affect children:

- It can set off an asthma attack, making it hard for a child to breathe.
- It can cause pneumonia, an infection in the lungs, or bronchitis, a swelling of the airways of the lungs.
- It can cause painful ear infections.
- It can make children cough and wheeze more.

- It can increase the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is the sudden, unexplained death of a baby under a year old.

In addition, when young children are exposed to second-hand smoke, they are more likely to become teenage smokers.

Second-hand smoke is also bad for women who want to get pregnant and for the unborn babies of women who are pregnant.

- Women who are exposed to second-hand smoke may have difficulty getting pregnant.
- If a pregnant woman is exposed to second-hand smoke, her baby is more likely to be stillborn or have birth defects.

#### Explain third-hand smoke.

We've talked about smoking and second-hand smoke. Now we need to talk about another danger that you may not have heard of yet: *third-hand smoke*.

Third-hand smoke includes chemicals from tobacco smoke that remain long after smoke and second-hand smoke have disappeared. These chemicals are carried in the smoke but stay behind on a smoker's hair, skin, and clothing; in cars; and on surfaces like walls, floors, rugs, or furniture.

This third-hand smoke contains harmful chemicals that babies or young children could swallow if they get this substance on their hands and then put their hands in their mouths.

Distribute **Handout 4: Keeping my family tobacco free**. Review the handout with the learner. Ask the learner to check the appropriate boxes in the handout.

If you keep your children from being exposed to second-hand and third-hand smoke, you'll help them stay healthier. Here are some of the ways to do so:

- Don't smoke anywhere in your home, even near an open window.
  - Smoke can spread quickly throughout your home (including your child's room)
  - Even after the smoke is gone, the dangerous chemicals remain
- Don't smoke in your car, even if the windows are open or your children aren't riding with you.
- Don't allow anyone else to smoke in your home or your car.

If you smoke

- Do so outdoors, away from the house and from open windows and doors.
- Wear a *smoking outfit* to protect your regular clothing and hair from third-hand smoke.
  - A smoking outfit might be a coat, jacket, long-sleeved shirt, or sweatshirt, as well as a hat or cap to cover your hair.
  - Keep your smoking outfit outdoors or in a mudroom or garage where it won't touch other clothing, furniture, or family members.
  - Launder your smoking outfit weekly.
  - The outfit will help you avoid bringing dangerous third-hand smoke into your home and exposing your children to it.
- Wash your hands, face, and neck after you finish smoking to remove third-hand smoke.
- Bathe and wash your hair often to remove third-hand smoke.
- Try to quit.

If family members, friends, or other people who spend time with your child smoke

- Ask them to wash their hands before they touch your child.
- Provide a clean top or shirt for them to put over their smoky clothes before they hold your child.

If these requests seem rude, remember that your children can't choose the air they breathe. Just as you protect them from other dangers, you have to protect them from dangerous chemicals in smoke.

- Be sure that your child's childcare center or school is tobacco-free.
- When you are out with your children, look for public places that are smoke-free or that offer nonsmoking areas.
- Teach your children not to smoke.
- Be a good example, and quit smoking.

Explain that smoking also affects home safety. Distribute **Handout 5: Smoking and home safety** and review it with the learner.

We've talked a lot about the health effects of smoking. We should also mention some important safety issues related to smoking: fires and poisoning.

Smoking is the number 1 cause of deaths from home fires. Most fires caused by smoking start on beds, on furniture, or in trash. A lit cigarette dropped onto a sofa or a smoldering butt tossed in a trashcan can start a fire in seconds. Many of the people who die in these fires are children and the elderly.

In addition, the nicotine in tobacco products is a dangerous poison. If you suspect nicotine poisoning, call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 immediately.

**Handout 5: Smoking and home safety** shows some precautions to reduce the risks of having tobacco products in the home. Of course, the best way to reduce risks is for everyone in the home to stop smoking and to get rid of all tobacco products.

Introduce the topic of quitting smoking.

I said earlier that we would talk about quitting, and we've referred to it many times already.

Ask.

Why do you think so many smokers find it difficult to quit smoking?

Give the learner a few moments to think of an answer. Then explain.

Quitting smoking is difficult because smoking is both a physical addiction and a psychological habit. To quit, you have to overcome both the addiction and the habit.

We'll talk about the addiction first. Tobacco contains a substance called *nicotine*, which is a very addictive. It is actually more addictive than crack cocaine and heroin. Like those drugs, nicotine affects chemicals in your brain. It makes smokers feel good. People who smoke

soon become addicted to (or dependent on) nicotine. And the more they smoke, the more dependent they become.

Teenagers are particularly sensitive to nicotine. If they start smoking, they are likely to become addicted more quickly than adults are.

Because nicotine is addictive, when smokers try to stop, their bodies go into withdrawal. For most smokers, withdrawal is the most difficult part of quitting. Smokers who are going through withdrawal often have these symptoms:

- Feel anxious, nervous, and irritable
- Have difficulty sleeping
- Have headaches
- Feel hungrier than usual
- May gain weight

Keep in mind:

- Cigarette cravings usually last only 3-5 minutes. Try to do something else until the craving goes away.
- Withdrawal symptoms usually go away within a few days to a few weeks.

It's important to note that even though people may be addicted to nicotine, they **can** quit smoking. It's hard, but it's important for the health of the smoker and the entire family.

Ask the learner if he or she has ever tried to quit smoking, or if he or she has been around someone who has tried to quit. Did the learner feel or observe any symptoms?

Then explain that smoking is also a habit.

Now let's talk about the smoking habit. Most people have a pattern of smoking. They associate certain people, places, or activities with smoking. For example, you may smoke after every meal, while you're talking on the phone, while you're driving in the car on the way to work, or any time you feel stressed or bored.

Ask the learner if she or someone else in the family has particular smoking habits.

So, it's difficult to quit smoking because it's both an addiction and a habit.

If quitting is so difficult, why bother?

Distribute **Handout 6: What are the benefits of quitting smoking?** Review the first page with the learner.

**Handout 6: What are the benefits of quitting smoking?** shows some of the benefits of quitting smoking.

If you can think of any other benefits, add them to the lists. Make a checkmark next to all the benefits that seem important to you. Circle the three most important benefits. Then, if you are tempted to smoke, focus on these three benefits. You might want to post this handout where you can see it often—on your refrigerator, on a bulletin board, or next to your mirror.

**Ask.**

How soon do you think you'll see some improvements to your health?

**Distribute Handout 7: Timeline for health benefits if you quit smoking right now.**

The best news about quitting is that you can feel the benefits immediately, no matter how long you have smoked. Handout 6: Timeline for health benefits if you quit smoking right now shows you some of the changes you can expect to see. For example,

- The air around you is less dangerous to your children and to other adults
- Your heart rate and blood pressure return to normal
- Your circulation improves
- You don't cough as much
- Your lungs work better
- Your sense of smell improves
- Food tastes better
- You gradually get more energy.

If you do quit smoking, you are likely to live a longer, healthier life. You'll also be providing a healthier home for your children, and setting a good example for them.

**Explain that there are various methods to quit smoking.**

Because quitting is difficult for most people, health experts have developed several methods to help smokers quit. You may need to try more than one before you succeed. Don't get discouraged if your earlier or even current attempts to quit do not succeed. It may take several tries for you to stop smoking.

Talk to your doctor about quitting. Since nicotine can change how some medications work, you should tell your doctor that you are quitting.

Below are some methods that you might consider if you want to stop smoking.

- You might ask your doctor to prescribe medicines to help you quit.
- You might try over-the-counter medications, such as nicotine replacement therapy. These medications replace cigarettes with other nicotine substances, like nicotine gum or a nicotine patch. These substances provide a low dose of nicotine, but not all the dangerous chemicals found in tobacco. They may help to relieve the physical craving and ease the withdrawal symptoms of quitting.
- You might "go cold turkey." That means you just stop smoking and never smoke again. This method can be challenging, but it works for some people.
- Instead of going cold turkey, you might gradually decrease the number of cigarettes you smoke each day.
- You might change your habits or behaviors associated with smoking. You may need to develop different habits—for example, chewing gum instead of smoking in the car, or brushing your teeth right after every meal instead of lighting a cigarette.
- You might learn new ways to handle stress. Instead of smoking a cigarette when you feel worried or anxious, go for a short walk, read a magazine, or drink a cup of tea.
- You might join a smoking cessation or support program. Some people find it easier to quit when they have the support of others going through the same thing.

In addition to these methods, you can

- Ask for support from your family and friends.
- Try to stay busy and find activities that help to keep your mind off smoking.

Mention some of the help available to people who want to quit smoking. Distribute **Handout 8: My plan to quit smoking**.

If you want help to quit smoking, many programs are available. Some reputable programs include the following:

- Connecticut Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW) is a free telephone service that provides information and support for quitting, as well as nicotine replacement therapy (such as patches, gum, and lozenges). It's available seven days a week, 7 AM-3 AM. Quitline has stop-smoking coaches who speak English, Spanish, and some other languages. Quitline can also refer people to local programs.
- The American Lung Association has programs to help adults and teens stop smoking. Get more information online at [www.lungne.org](http://www.lungne.org) or call (860) 289-5401
- The National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation sponsors EX, a free quit-smoking program. See [www.becomeanex.org](http://www.becomeanex.org) for more information and to set up a free quitting plan.
- The National Cancer Institute offers free, accurate information and assistance, including a step-by step guide to quitting, called *Clearing the Air: Quit Smoking Today*, at [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov).
- The Connecticut Department of Public Health website lists stop-smoking programs in Connecticut. See <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3137&q=388060>.

Many people find it helpful to develop a plan to quit smoking. **Handout 8: My plan to quit smoking** offers a sample plan.

Explain the homework to the learner. Ask the learner what actions she plans to take to protect her child from second-hand and third-hand smoke.

The homework for this lesson is to take at least three actions to protect your child from second-hand and third-hand smoke.

Think about any challenges you'll face and how you might handle them.

### Conclusion

Distribute **Handout 9: Tips for protecting children** from tobacco smoke, which summarizes this lesson.

Today we've talked about the harmful effects of tobacco smoke, especially on children. We've also talked about some ways that people have been able to quit smoking.

Do you think that you'll make any changes as a result of what we've talked about today?

**Note to trainer:** Please write down any changes that the learner plans to make on the Home Visitors Follow-Up Notes page. We would like to track the learner's plans to help measure the effectiveness of this training.

Introduce the activity for children. Distribute **Handout 10: Help me to be smoke free and healthy**. Review the directions with the learner.

Explain to your child that smoking is not healthy either for the person who is smoking or for the people around the smoker. Ask your child to draw a picture to show an adult who smokes why it is important to quit. Give your child some suggestions if she needs help thinking of what to draw.

### Evaluation

Please complete the **Home visitor's feedback and follow-up notes** after you have finished the lesson. You may wish to wait until your next visit to answer the follow-up questions about what changes the learner has made and what activities the learner has used with his or her children. Then return the form to the Family Services Coordinator.

### Review

After you have completed this topic, you may want to review it with the learner during your next home visit. Ask what the learner remembers.

During our last visit, we talked about smoking tobacco products. Would you like to tell me what you remember about what we said?

See how much the learner recalls. You might remind the learner of the following information.

A healthy home is free of tobacco. There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco—whether in a cigarette, cigar, or pipe. Tobacco smoke contains hundreds of dangerous chemicals, and all smoking is harmful.

1. For the smoker  
Smoking is associated with an increased risk of many types of cancer, as well as many diseases of the heart, lungs, and other parts of the body.  
Smoking is especially bad for pregnant women and their unborn children.
2. Second-hand smoke  
Smoking harms the people around the smoker too. Breathing second-hand smoke is especially dangerous for children.
3. Third-hand smoke  
The chemicals left on the smoker's skin, hair, and clothing, as well on furniture, rugs, walls, and floors, are also dangerous, especially to young children.

It's important to protect children from being exposed to second-hand and third-hand smoke. Some of the key ways to protect them are

- Don't allow smoking in your home or car.
- Keep your child away from people who are smoking.
- Ask people who smoke to wash before they touch your child.
- Quit smoking, and encourage others to quit.

Quitting smoking is difficult, but there are many programs to help people quit. Smokers should choose the program that works best for themselves.



Ask open-ended questions, such as the ones below. Make a note of any progress the learner has made or any questions the learner may have about this topic.

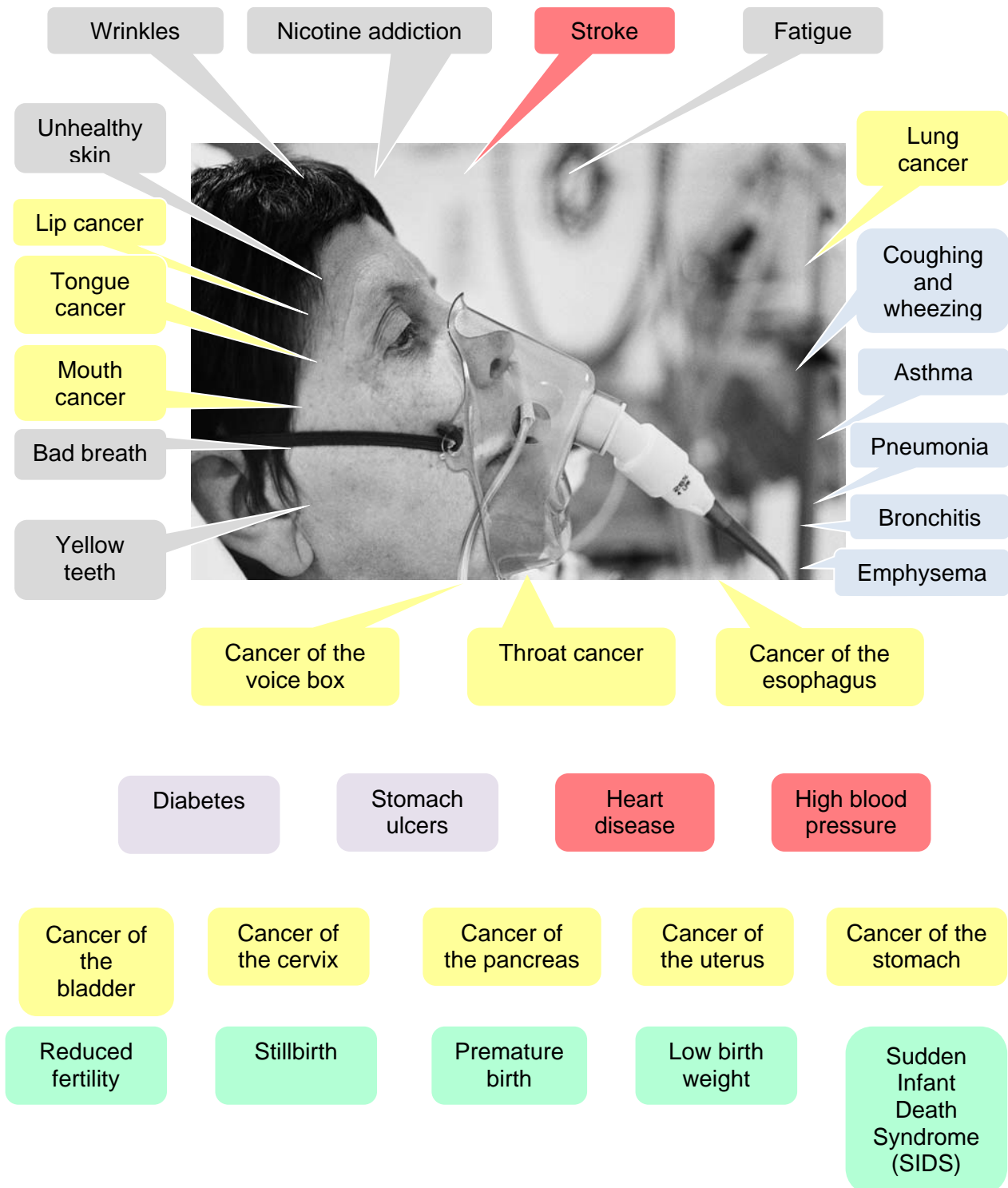
If the learner is a smoker, ask about any efforts to quit smoking. Encourage the learner to keep trying.

Your homework was to do at least three things to protect your child from second-hand and third-hand smoke.

- What did you do?
- How did that work out?
- How do you feel about these efforts?
- Did you have an opportunity to do the activity with your child? If so, how did it go?

## Handout 1 How does smoking affect you? Picture yourself here

Imagine your picture on this page. Here are some of the risks you take when you smoke. Is smoking worth these risks?






## Handout 2a: Which message makes me want to quit smoking? English

In September 2012, the warning labels on packs of cigarettes will change. The warnings will be bigger and easier to see. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration wants to show the dangers of smoking more clearly.

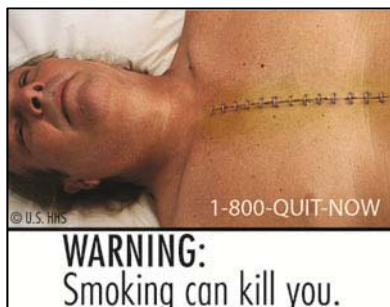
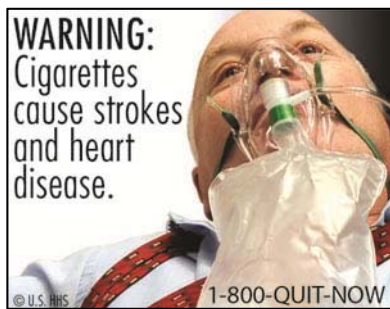
Look at the new warnings below and decide which labels—if any—you find most effective. Pick three labels and explain why the message would want to make you quit smoking. In the space next to the label, write down what made you select that warning.

Can you think of any way to make the warnings more effective?

Warning label	Why this label makes me want to quit smoking
	
	
	

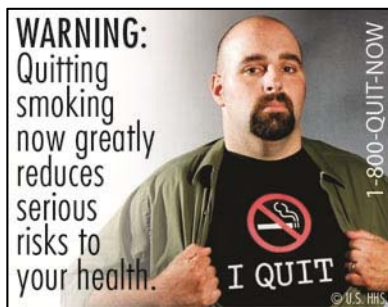
Warning label

Why this label makes me want to quit smoking



Warning label

Why this label makes me want to quit smoking



Can you think of any way to make these labels more effective?




Source: <http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/Labeling/CigaretteWarningLabels/default.htm>

## Handout 2b: Which message makes me want to quit smoking? Spanish

In September 2012, the warning labels on packs of cigarettes will change. The warnings will be bigger and easier to see. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration wants to show the dangers of smoking more clearly.

Look at the new warnings below and decide which labels—if any—you find most effective. Pick three labels and explain why the message would want to make you quit smoking. In the space next to the label, write down what made you select that warning.

Can you think of any way to make the warnings more effective?

Warning label	Why this label makes me want to quit smoking
	
	
	

Warning label

Why this label makes me want to quit smoking



1-800-QUIT-NOW © U.S. HHS

**ADVERTENCIA:**  
Los cigarrillos causan cáncer.



**ADVERTENCIA:**  
Los cigarrillos causan derrames cerebrales y enfermedades cardíacas.

© U.S. HHS 1-800-QUIT-NOW



**ADVERTENCIA: FUMAR DURANTE EL EMBARAZO, PUEDE DAÑAR A SU BEBÉ.**

1-800-QUIT-NOW

1-800-QUIT-NOW © U.S. HHS



© U.S. HHS 1-800-QUIT-NOW

**ADVERTENCIA:**  
Fumar puede matarle.

**Warning label**

**Why this label makes me want to quit smoking**



Can you think of any way to make these labels more effective?

**Source:** <http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/Labeling/CigaretteWarningLabels/default.htm>



## Handout 3a                      How does smoking affect nonsmokers?

What do you already know about the dangers of smoking to people around you? Do you know—or can you guess—which answers below are correct?

If you smoke around your child:

1. How many chemicals do you put into your child's air?
  - 75
  - 350
  - 4,000
  - 7,000
2. How many chemicals that are harmful to human health do you put into your child's air?
  - 25
  - 100
  - 250
  - 350
3. Which of these poisons are in second-hand smoke?
  - Arsenic (used to kill rats)
  - Benzene (used in gasoline)
  - Hydrogen cyanide (used in chemical weapons)
  - All of the above
4. How many chemicals that cause cancer do you put into your child's air?
  - 0
  - 17
  - 48
  - 70
5. Which diseases do you increase your child's risk of getting?
  - Cancer of the immune system (lymphoma)
  - Leukemia
  - Brain tumors
  - All of the above
6. What other health risks might you expose your child to?
  - Early death
  - Heart disease
  - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
  - All of the above
7. What learning problems might you increase the risk of?
  - Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
  - Learning disorders
  - Behavior problems
  - All of the above
8. What is the safe level of second-hand smoke?
  - 1 cigarette per hour in a 10 x 10 room
  - 2 cigarettes per hour in a 12 x 12 room
  - 4 cigarettes per hour in a 12 x 12 room
  - There is no safe level
9. Second-hand smoke contributes to how many deaths in the United States each year?
  - 2,500
  - 5,000
  - 50,000
  - 400,000

## Handout 3b How does smoking affect nonsmokers? Answer key

What do you already know about the dangers of smoking to people around you?

**The correct answers are shown in bold in red.**

If you smoke around your child:

1. How many chemicals do you put into your child's air?
  - 75
  - 350
  - 4,000
  - 7,000**
2. How many chemicals that are harmful to human health do you put into your child's air?
  - 25
  - 100
  - 250**
  - 350
3. Which of these poisons are in second-hand smoke?
  - Arsenic (used to kill rats)
  - Benzene (used in gasoline)
  - Hydrogen cyanide (used in chemical weapons)
  - All of the above**
4. How many chemicals that cause cancer do you put into your child's air?
  - 0
  - 17
  - 48
  - 70**
5. Which diseases do you increase your child's risk of getting?
  - Cancer of the immune system (lymphoma)
  - Leukemia
  - Brain tumors
  - All of the above**
6. What other health risks might you expose your child to?
  - Early death
  - Heart disease
  - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
  - All of the above**
7. What learning problems might you increase the risk of?
  - Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
  - Learning disorders
  - Behavior problems
  - All of the above**
8. What is the safe level of second-hand smoke?
  - 1 cigarette per hour in a 10 x 10 room
  - 2 cigarettes per hour in a 12 x 12 room
  - 4 cigarettes per hour in a 12 x 12 room
  - There is no safe level**
9. Second-hand smoke contributes to how many deaths in the United States each year?
  - 2,500
  - 5,000
  - 50,000**
  - 400,000

## Handout 4 Keeping my family tobacco free

By reducing or eliminating your family’s exposure to second-hand and third-hand smoke, you’ll contribute significantly to their good health. You can use this handout as a reminder of ways to make sure that your family is not exposed to tobacco smoke.

First-hand smoke	Smoke that a smoker breathes in from a lit cigarette, cigar, or pipe
Second-hand smoke	Smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe, and the smoke that a smoker breathes out
Third-hand smoke	Chemicals from tobacco smoke that stay behind on a smoker’s hair, skin, and clothing; in cars or on surfaces like walls, floors, rugs, or furniture

Here are some things that you can do to make sure that your children are not exposed to second-hand or third-hand smoke. Check the actions that you already take, and fill in the dates of the actions you plan to take. Please consider adding any actions that you do not plan to take.

Action	I already do this	I plan to start on (date)	I have no plan to do this
Don’t smoke <b>anywhere</b> in your home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Smoke can spread quickly throughout your home (including your child’s room)</li> <li>○ Even after the smoke is gone, the dangerous chemicals remain</li> </ul>			
Don’t smoke in your car Even if the windows are open or your children aren’t riding with you.			
Don’t allow anyone else to smoke in your home or your car.			
<b>If you smoke</b>			
Do so outdoors, away from the house and not near open windows.			
Wear a <i>smoking outfit</i> to protect your regular clothing and hair from third-hand smoke. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A smoking outfit might be a coat, jacket, long-sleeved shirt, or sweatshirt, as well as a hat or cap to cover your hair.</li> <li>• Keep your smoking outfit outdoors or in a mudroom or garage where it won’t touch other clothing, furniture, or family members.</li> <li>• Launder your smoking outfit weekly.</li> <li>• The outfit will help you avoid bringing dangerous third-hand smoke into your home and exposing your children to it.</li> </ul>			
Wash your hands, face, and neck after you finish smoking to remove third-hand smoke.			
Bathe and wash your hair often to remove third-hand smoke.			

<b>Action</b>	<b>I already do this</b>	<b>I plan to start on (date)</b>	<b>I have no plan to do this</b>
Try to quit.			
If family members, friends, or other people who spend time with your child smoke			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask them to wash their hands before they touch your child.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a clean top or shirt for them to put over their smoky clothes before they hold your child.</li> </ul>			
In general			
Be sure that your child's daycare or school is tobacco-free.			
When you are out with your children, look for public places that are smoke free or offer non-smoking areas.			
Keep talking to your children about not smoking.			
Teach your children not to smoke.			
Be a good example, and quit smoking.			

## Handout 5 Smoking and home safety

Smoking is the number 1 cause of deaths from home fires. In addition, the nicotine in tobacco products is a dangerous poison. If young children chew on a cigarette butt, or on nicotine gum or patches, they can be poisoned. (If you suspect nicotine poisoning, call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 immediately.)

Of course, the best way to prevent these fires and poisonings is not to smoke. But if people do smoke, here are some safety precautions:

Make the safest possible smoking choices	Smoke “fire-safe” cigarettes (cigarettes that are less likely to burn if left unattended)—they are marked “FSC” on the package
	Use child-resistant lighters and containers for matches
	Smoke outside
Handle ashes and cigarette butts safely	Don’t leave lit cigarettes, cigars, or pipes lying around or unattended
	Collect ashes and butts in deep, sturdy ashtrays that are hard to tip over or in a can filled with sand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the ashtrays on something sturdy that will not easily catch on fire (like a table)</li> <li>• Don’t put ashtrays on upholstered sofas and chairs that can catch on fire fast and burn fast</li> </ul>
	Before you throw out cigarette butts and ashes, make sure they are <b>completely</b> out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either soak them in water or stub them out in sand</li> <li>• Never toss hot cigarette butts or ashes into a trashcan or wastepaper basket</li> </ul>
	Check under furniture cushions and in other places where people smoke for cigarette butts that may have fallen out of sight
Do not smoke	When you are not alert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you are sleepy or are in bed</li> <li>• When you have been drinking</li> <li>• When you have taken medicine or other drugs that keep you from being alert</li> </ul>
	Anywhere that oxygen is used, even if the oxygen is turned off
Keep smoking materials away from children	Keep all tobacco and related products (including cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, and nicotine gum or patches), lighters, matches, and ashtrays out of reach of children
Make sure that your home has working smoke alarms	

## Handout 6      What are the benefits of quitting smoking?

Imagine that you have quit smoking. You can expect to see a lot of benefits.

1. Please read the lists of benefits below. If you can think of other benefits, add them to the lists.
2. Make a checkmark next to all the benefits that seem important to you.
3. Circle the 3 benefits that are most important to you.
4. If you are tempted to smoke, think about these 3 benefits of not smoking.

Benefits for your children	Benefits for yourself
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll protect my children's health by keeping them away from second-hand and third-hand smoke.	<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be less likely to develop cancer, heart disease, and other serious illnesses.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll set a good example for my children so that they'll be less likely to smoke when they get older.	<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be able to do everyday activities—such as climbing the stairs and light housework—without becoming short of breath as quickly.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be more likely to live a longer, healthier life and be able to care for my children and their children longer.	<input type="checkbox"/> My breath will smell better.
<input type="checkbox"/> I can use the money I save (by not smoking) to buy things my children need or want.	<input type="checkbox"/> My hair will smell better.
<input type="checkbox"/> My home will be safer from fires.	<input type="checkbox"/> My clothing will smell better.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> My stained teeth will get whiter.
	<input type="checkbox"/> My fingers and fingernails won't be yellow any more.
	<input type="checkbox"/> My food will taste better.
	<input type="checkbox"/> My sense of smell will return to normal.
	<input type="checkbox"/> I'll save money by not buying tobacco products and not damaging my clothing, furniture, or other belongings by smoking.
	<input type="checkbox"/> My home will smell better.
	<input type="checkbox"/> My car will smell better.
	<input type="checkbox"/> I won't have to go outside in bad weather just to smoke.
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other:</i>

## Handout 7      Timeline for health benefits if you quit smoking right now<sup>2</sup>

1. Please write in today's date and time: \_\_\_\_\_.  
If you quit smoking right now:






2. Please write in the date and time 6 months from now: \_\_\_\_\_.  
If you quit smoking right now, you can see all of these benefits by the date above.

<sup>2</sup> Source: University of Massachusetts Medical School, [www.umassmed.edu](http://www.umassmed.edu)

## Handout 8 My plan to quit smoking

Many people find it helpful to plan quitting. Below are some steps in a sample plan that you might decide to follow. Fill in the blanks, and check off the actions as you do them.

<p>1. Decide to quit</p> 	<p>My reasons for quitting are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Worry about my child's health and safety</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Worry about my own health and safety</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Want to live longer, healthier life</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Just want to feel better</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Want to have more energy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Want to save money</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Want to look and smell better</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Want to have more control over my own life</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Want to set a good example for my child</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please fill in your own reasons):</li> </ul>
<p>2. Pick a quit day within the next month</p>	<p>My quit day is _____</p>
<p>3. Prepare for the quit day</p>  <p><b>Quit Day!</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've marked my quit day on my calendar</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've discussed quitting with my doctor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've decided whether I want to use prescription medicine, over-the-counter medicine, cold-turkey, or some other method</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've found a support group, class, or program if I want one</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've told my family, friends, and coworkers, and asked for their support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've gotten rid of all my smoking supplies—in my home, car, and workplace</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I have items (like sugarless gum, candy, or vegetables) to replace the cigarettes I'm used to having in my mouth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've planned for the challenges I expect to face (like being around people who are still smoking) and have thought about how to handle problems that are likely to arise</li> </ul>
<p>4. Follow through on the quit day</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've stopped smoking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've reminded myself of why I want to quit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've been keeping busy—I've especially kept my hands busy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've tried to avoid activities and situations that usually make me want to smoke</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I've used other ways to relax or manage stress</li> </ul>
<p>5. Stay smoke-free</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I call on my support network if needed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I recognize my successful efforts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I think about the benefits of not smoking</li> </ul>
<p>6. If you slip up, don't get discouraged. Try again.</p>	



*Sources for help*

There are many programs—offering various options such as classes, support groups, individual counseling, telephone counseling, and web-based support—available to help people stop smoking.

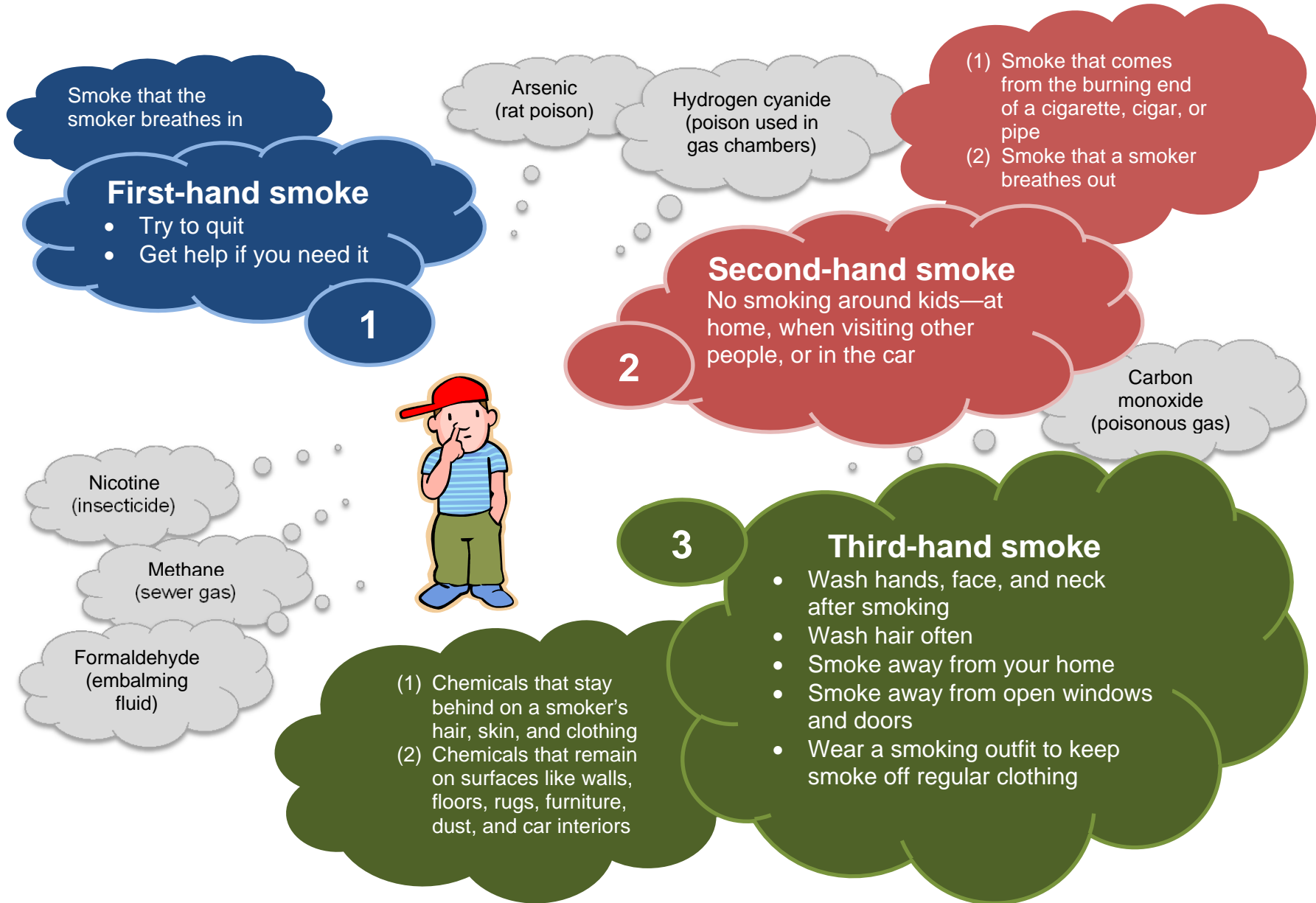
The Connecticut Department of Public Health website (<http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3137&q=388060>) has a list of local stop-smoking programs.

- Look for a program sponsored by a reputable organization.
- Be wary of programs that promise quick success (with no effort on your part) or charge a high fee.
- Choose the program that sounds best for you.

Some trusted programs are

- Connecticut Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW)  
Provides a free telephone helpline that is available seven days a week, 7 AM-3AM. It provides free information, support for quitting, referrals to programs in your own community, and nicotine replacement therapy (such as patches, gum, and lozenges). Coaches who speak English, Spanish, and other languages are available. This program is sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Public Health.
- American Lung Association in Connecticut (860-289-5401 or [www.lungne.org](http://www.lungne.org))  
Offers several programs to help adults and teens stop smoking.
- National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation ([www.becomeanex.org](http://www.becomeanex.org))  
Sponsors EX, a free quit-smoking program.
- National Cancer Institute ([www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov))  
Offers a step-by-step guide to quitting

## Handout 9 Tips for protecting children from tobacco smoke

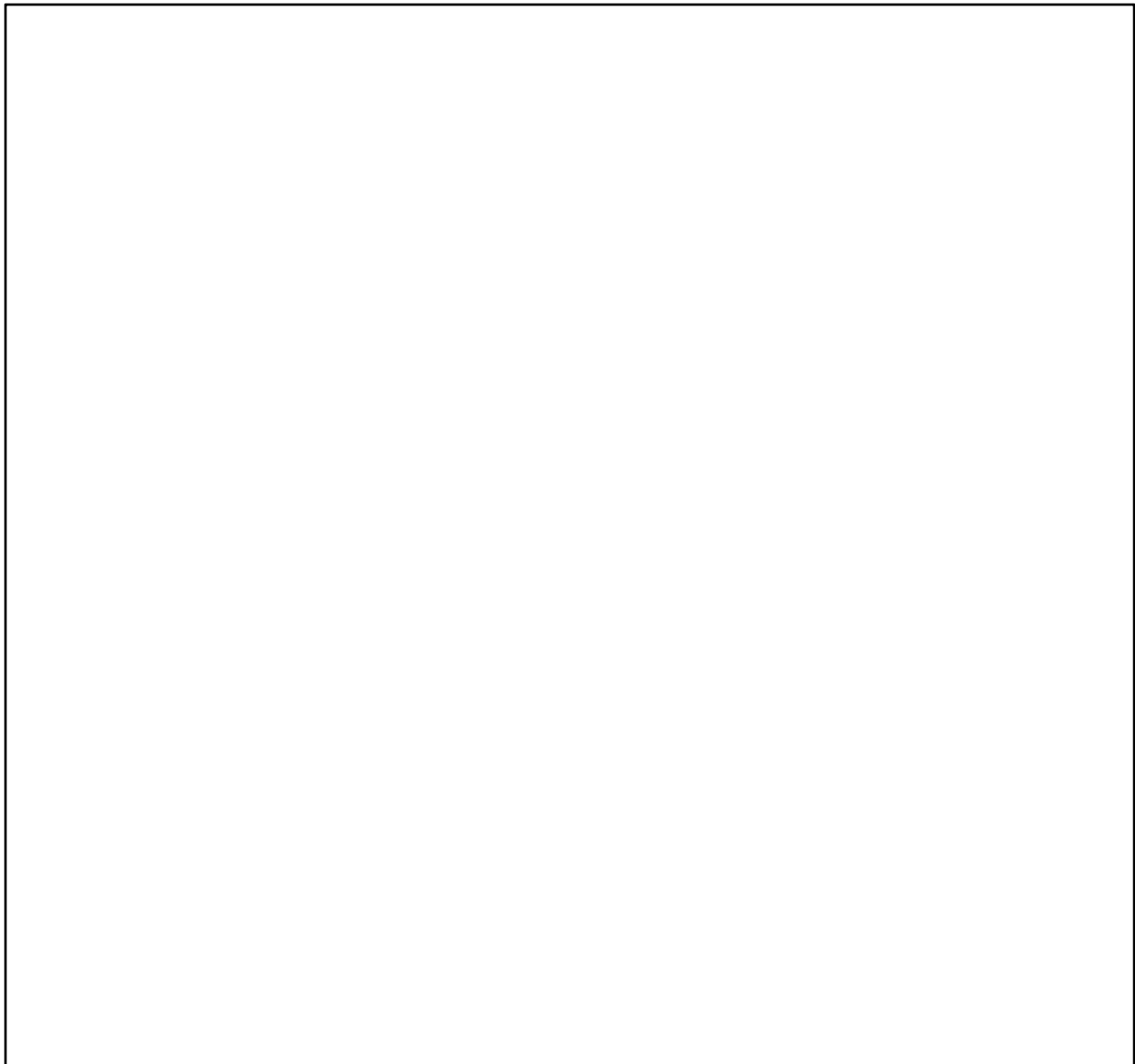


**Handout 10      Activity for children:  
Help me to be smoke free and healthy**

Smoking tobacco (a cigarette, cigar, or pipe) is not healthy for the person who is doing the smoking. It puts nasty smoke into the air he or she breathes. When that smoke gets inside the smoker's body, it can make the person very sick.

Did you know that smoking is also not healthy for people who are near people who are smoking—whether in a house, store, restaurant, school, car, bus, or train? The cigarette, cigar, or pipe puts nasty smoke into the air that everyone else is breathing. When it gets into their bodies, it can make them very sick too. Being around tobacco smoke is especially unhealthy for children.

Draw a picture to show an adult who smokes why it is important to quit.



### Home visitor’s feedback and follow-up notes

- Please fill in this form after you have completed the lesson and observed any follow-up activities. This training is a pilot program, and the course developers welcome your comments and suggestions on how to improve it.
- Please make a copy of this form, and give the copy to the Family Services Coordinator to forward to the developers. Please place the original in the child’s file.

Learner’s response to this lesson						
Did the learner find the topic	Please check the box that most closely applies					
	Interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boring
	Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to understand
	Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useless
Please summarize the learner’s plans to make changes as a result of this topic.						
Please identify any questions the learner had that were not covered in the topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please summarize any changes the learner actually made as a result of this topic.						
<b>Follow up:</b> Please list the activities that the learner did with his or her child and any comments about those activities.						
Your feedback on this lesson						
What was the most useful part of this lesson?						
What was the least useful part of this lesson?						
Do you have any suggestions for improving this lesson? For example, was the lesson too long or too short, with too much information or not enough information?						
Additional comments						

Your name:

Date:

Topic: Smoking

# Healthy Homes/Healthy Kids

## Advocating for a Healthy Home<sup>1</sup>

### Background information for trainers

Keeping and maintaining a healthy home sometimes means that an adult member of the household must act as an advocate for the family. The advocate may need to work with a landlord (who may be the property owner, a rental agent for the owner, or another agent for the owner); with state and local health, housing, building, and fire officials; with nonprofit agencies; with other residents in the home; and with other people or organizations.

If the learner is a tenant, then advocating for a healthy home often starts with a landlord. In such cases, it's helpful for the learner to understand the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and landlords.

Note: The information in this lesson is not intended to offer legal advice. It is simply a general overview of the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords (or landladies) in Connecticut. If learners have questions about their specific situations, they should consult appropriate legal professionals.

Below are lists of **some** rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants that are associated with healthy homes under Connecticut laws and regulations.<sup>2</sup>

#### The tenant must

- Obey all building, housing, and fire codes that apply to him or her.
- Keep the apartment as clean and safe as possible.
- Put all trash in the containers supplied by the landlord.
- Keep all sinks, toilets, tubs, and appliances in the apartment as clean as possible.
- Use all electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, elevators and other facilities and appliances in a reasonable manner.
- Tell the landlord right away if the apartment needs repairs that were not the fault of the tenant.
- Not destroy, damage, or remove any property or allow anyone else to do so.
- Not unreasonably withhold permission to the landlord to enter the apartment at reasonable times and with reasonable notice (that is, 24 hours) to inspect or to make necessary or required repairs.

#### The landlord must

- Obey all building and housing codes that deal with health and safety.
- Make all repairs necessary to keep the apartment in a livable condition.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Judith R. Dicine, Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney, Housing Matters, State of Connecticut, Division of Criminal Justice, Office of the Connecticut Chief State's Attorney, for her helpful suggestions on this topic.

<sup>2</sup> This information is current as of June 2011. Note that laws and regulations may change over time.

- However, if the tenant's family or guests cause damage that is more than normal wear and tear, the tenant must pay the landlord back.
- Keep all common areas clean and safe.
  - Common areas include the driveway, yard, hallways, and laundry rooms.
- Keep all electrical, plumbing, heating, ventilating, and other facilities and appliances supplied by the landlord, including elevators, in safe working order.
- Provide containers for trash and arrange for trash removal.
- Supply running water and, in most cases, hot water and heat at 65 degrees F.
- Repair, in a lead-safe manner, cracked, chipped, flaking or peeling paint that is dangerous to your health. (Call your Health Department for an inspection.)

Also note: A landlord cannot evict a rent-paying tenant or raise the rent within 6 months of when the tenant:

- Complains to the Health Department, Fair Rent Commission, Housing Code Office, or any other agency that is set up to protect tenants
- Asks the landlord to make repairs
- Joins a tenants' union

Sources:

- Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, *Tenants' Rights: General Information*, [http://ctlawhelp.org/files/pamphlets/housing/tr\\_general\\_information.pdf](http://ctlawhelp.org/files/pamphlets/housing/tr_general_information.pdf)
- Connecticut Judicial Branch, *Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants in Connecticut*, <http://www.jud.ct.gov/Publications/hm031.pdf>
- Connecticut General Statutes, Title 47a "Landlord and tenant", <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/pub/title47a.htm>

For more information about health and legal issues, contact the

- Local health department
- Local housing code enforcement agency (varies with town: ask the local Town Clerk)
- A Connecticut licensed attorney

## Resources for trainers

Please check with your program administration for a list of local and state resources and service providers.

2-1-1 is Connecticut's free information and referral service. By dialing 2-1-1 (toll-free throughout the state), learners have access to information about thousands of health and human service resources. See <http://www.211ct.org/>

Connecticut Judicial Branch, *Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants in Connecticut*, <http://www.jud.ct.gov/Publications/hm031.pdf>. This document also has a helpful list that tenants can use to check an apartment for health and safety conditions before they rent it.

--- Spanish version, *Derechos y Responsabilidades de los Arrendadores e Inquilinos de Connecticut*, <http://www.jud.ct.gov/Publications/Spanish/HM031s.pdf>

Connecticut Network for Legal Aid, <http://ctlawhelp.org/self-help-guides/housing>, has information about various housing issues, including energy and utility problems, lead poisoning, and repairs.

Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, *Tenants' Rights: General Information*, [http://ctlawhelp.org/files/pamphlets/housing/tr\\_general\\_information.pdf](http://ctlawhelp.org/files/pamphlets/housing/tr_general_information.pdf)

## Lesson Plan: Advocating for a healthy home

### Learning objectives

At the end of this topic, learners will be able to

- Recognize the importance of advocating for a healthy home
- Define advocating
- List the steps of advocating effectively
- Apply the steps of advocating effectively to a personal healthy home issue

### Materials you'll need for this lesson

- Copies of handouts
- Pens or pencils

For children's activities

- Child's safety scissors or regular scissors for adult
- Colored pencils, pens, crayons, or markers

Start with a review of the previous week's topic. See that topic for review suggestions.

Introduce the new topic: how to advocate for a healthy home.

Today we are going to talk about advocating for a healthy home for your family.

Explain.

*Advocating* is a fancy word that means *supporting, standing up for, speaking up for, or protecting a person or an idea*. In this lesson, we'll focus on advocating to protect your child's health from dangers in and around your home. (Of course, you can advocate for other things as well—such as advocating for help for your child in school.)

Advocating may mean finding people and organizations that can help you to keep your family healthy. It may mean explaining your family's needs to the person from whom you rent an apartment, your town's health or housing department, your child's school, or a community agency. It may mean speaking up to start new programs or to change community policies.

Ask.

Can you think of a time when you had had to speak, write, or act to make sure that your child's needs were met? What happened?

After the learner describes that experience, explain the importance of advocating for a healthy home.

Some of the actions needed to keep your home healthy are things that you can do yourself. For example, you can keep your house clean, pick up clutter, and wash dirty dishes promptly. These actions help keep pests out of your home.



But sometimes you'll need other people to help make or keep your home healthy. For example, if the roof of your apartment building is leaking and making your ceiling wet and moldy, you may need to ask the landlord (or the person authorized by the landlord to negotiate repairs) to repair the leak. Then you'll need to *advocate* for the changes to help your family stay healthy.

You can advocate by talking, writing, or acting. In the previous example, you might advocate for your family by talking to the landlord or writing her a note. Or you might join with other tenants to ask her to repair the roof.

Explain the five steps for advocating.

Advocating is a skill that you can learn. Learning how to advocate can help to keep your family healthy.

In this topic, we will explore the five steps for advocating effectively:

1. Believe in your family and yourself.
2. Identify what your family needs.
3. Identify the resources that can help you meet those needs.
4. Explain your needs to the people or organizations that can help.
5. Continue advocating as long as necessary.

Explain the first step.

The first step of becoming an effective advocate is to believe in your family and yourself. You can think of it as the foundation for making and maintaining a healthy home.

Ask the learner.

- Do you believe that you and your family have a right to a healthy home?
- Do you believe that you have the right to advocate for your family?

If you can answer yes to these questions, then you are on your way to becoming an effective advocate for a healthy home.

Distribute **Handout 1: Building a Belief in Yourself and Your Family.**

Please look at Handout 1. It lists some ways that you might build on your belief in yourself and your family. Please check off any ideas you might use. Write down any other ideas that you have.

Explain.

Believing in yourself also means that you are willing to work to ensure that you and your family can have a healthy home.

The rest of this lesson will help you understand how to advocate for this goal.

Explain the second step: Identify your family's needs.

Step 2: Once you have started to build the foundation for being an effective advocate, you can take the second step: identifying your family's needs. These needs are the things for which you can advocate.

When you identify these needs, be as specific as possible.

Let's take an example. Imagine that your child—we'll call her Maria—has been having frequent asthma attacks. You know that some of the things that trigger her attacks are smoking and mold.

Now you need some more information:

- Are there asthma triggers in your home?
- What is the source of the asthma triggers?

You check your home and see wet spots and dark patches on Maria's bedroom ceiling. You suspect that the roof may be leaking and causing mold to grow there. Now you have to start advocating for Maria by contacting the landlord to fix the roof.

You also learn, by talking with the landlord, that a new neighbor has moved in. You see that your neighbor sometimes smokes right outside your apartment door. You know that cigarette smoke also triggers Maria's asthma. You'll also need to start advocating for the neighbor to stop smoking near your apartment.

Distribute Handout 2. Conduct the activity.

Please look at Handout 2. Think about your family's needs. Try to be specific. Write down these needs in the left column. Circle the needs that are most important, so you will know which ones to work on first.

Explain the third step: Identify the resources that can help you meet your needs.

Note: Please check with your program administration to obtain a current list of local and state resources and service providers. You may also wish to refer learners to Connecticut's free information and referral service, 2-1-1 (a toll-free number throughout the state).

Step 3: After you have identified your family's needs, you can think about the people and organizations that can help you meet those needs. These people and organizations are your **resources**. They might include friends, relatives, neighbors, counselors, community organizations, schools, libraries, religious groups, local health and housing agencies, and state agencies (such as the Connecticut Department of Public Health).

Some resources can answer questions. For example, a neighbor might tell you about a program that helps low-income families fix up their homes. You might find information about a program to help your neighbor stop smoking. Other resources may be able to provide the help directly.

For some needs—such as certain repairs to keep your home safe, healthy, and livable—you may have specific legal rights. Your local health, housing, building, or fire officials should be able to help. Check with your resources to learn if those rights apply to your family's needs.

Explain.

As you look for resources in your community, you may find other people who share your concerns. These people can also be valuable resources. You can join with other people who have similar needs to share ideas, find new resources, and tell community leaders about your concerns. Working with other people helps to build a community that is stronger and more likely to respond to your needs.

Ask the learner.

Have you had any successful experience of working with other people to advocate for your family?

Explain the next step: Explain your needs to the people or organizations that can help. Distribute **Handout 3: Tips for Explaining Your Family's Needs.**

Step 4: The next step is explaining your needs to the people or organizations that can help.

Handout 3 gives you some tips for explaining your family's needs. Using these tips will help you get the best results.

To start the conversation:

- Explain the problem as specifically as possible. (You may wish to make notes before your conversation to make sure you remember all the important points.)
- Ask for a specific solution or help in solving the problem.

To advocate effectively, try this approach:

- Be as pleasant, polite, and positive as possible.
- Keep the conversation on the topic.

Write notes on what a person tells you. Include this information:

- Who the person is
- What the person's job or title is
- The date of the conversation
- What action, if any, the person promises to take

Here is an effective way to finish the conversation:

- Ask for action or answers to your questions by a certain date.
- State that you will follow up by a certain date (and then do so).
- End with a thank you.

Introduce the activity. Ask the learner to fill out a sample conversation about a need he or she has identified.

Explain the last step in advocating for your family.

The last step of advocating is to continue advocating for a healthy home as long as necessary. Some problems take a long time to resolve. Do not give up if you encounter difficulties.

Please keep in mind that advocating is a skill that you can learn. The more you practice, the easier it becomes, and the more skillful you become. You can try out these skills over the next several weeks if you have a chance to advocate for your family or yourself.

Summarize the session.

Today we talked about advocating for a healthy home. We explained that advocating means standing up for your family. It means making sure that your family's needs are met.

Distribute **Handout 4: Tips for Advocating Effectively.**

Handout 4 is a summary of the five steps in advocating for a healthy home.

1. Believe in your family and yourself.
2. Identify what your family needs.
3. Identify the resources that can help you meet your family's needs.
4. Explain your family's needs to the people or organizations that can help.
5. Continue advocating as long as necessary.

Conclusion. Please make a note of any changes that the learner plans to make.

Do you think that you'll make any changes as a result of what we've talked about today?

Explain the homework.

Over the next weeks, please look for opportunities to advocate for your healthy home. If you have an opportunity, try to apply the steps you learned today.

Introduce the first activity for children. Distribute **Handout 5: I deserve a healthy home.** Review the directions for the activity with the learner.

Even young children can become advocates for themselves. You can do this activity to encourage your child to believe in his or her right to have a healthy home.

Introduce the second activity for children. Distribute **Handout 6: Match: What do you need to have a healthy home?** Review the directions for the activity with the learner.

This activity tells or reminds children what a healthy home is.

Evaluation.

Please complete the **Home visitor's feedback and follow-up notes** after you have finished the lesson. You may wish to wait until your next visit to answer the follow-up questions about what changes the learner has made and what activities the learner has used with his or her children. Then return the form to the Family Services Coordinator.

**Review.**

After you have completed this topic, you may want to review it with the learner during your next home visit. Ask what the learner remembers.

During our last visit, we talked about advocating for a healthy home for your family. Would you like to tell me what you remember about what we said?

See how much the learner recalls. You might remind the learner of the following information.

We explained that advocating means standing up and speaking up to keep your family healthy. It means making sure that your family's needs are met.

We discussed five steps in advocating for a healthy home. Do you remember what they were?

Correct answers:

1. Believe in your family and yourself.
2. Identify your family's needs.
3. Identify the resources that can help you meet your needs.
4. Explain your needs to the people or organizations that can help.
5. Continue advocating as long as necessary.

## Handout 1: Building a Belief in Yourself and Your Family

Step 1 of becoming an effective advocate for a healthy home is to believe in yourself and your family. Below are some ways that you can build a belief in yourself and your family. Check off the ways that you might use.



### Advocating for a Healthy Home

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can remind myself that my family deserves a home that helps everyone to stay healthy. | <input type="checkbox"/> I can stop comparing my home against other homes.           | <input type="checkbox"/> I can applaud my own successes in making and keeping my home healthy.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can appreciate my own efforts to keep my home healthy.                                | <input type="checkbox"/> I can learn more about making and keeping a healthy home.   | <input type="checkbox"/> I can accept my mistakes as opportunities to learn more about a healthy home. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can appreciate my family's efforts to keep our home healthy.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> I can choose from recommended ways to keep my home healthy. | <input type="checkbox"/> I can appreciate my efforts to keep trying, even when I face difficulties.    |

Can you think of other ways to strengthen your belief in yourself and your family? Write your ideas in the space below.

## Handout 2: My Family’s Needs and Resources

Below is a form that you can fill out to identify what your family needs to make and keep your home healthy, some resources you can use, and actions you can take. The first row shows an example of how you might fill out this table. Circle the most important needs, so that you will know which ones to work on first.

What does my family need? (Be as specific as possible)	Resources			What can I do and when?
	Who can answer my questions? (Include people and organizations)	Who can help meet this need and how? (Include people and organizations)	What people and organizations share my concerns?	
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>My child needs a dry home, without mold, to reduce her asthma attacks.</p>	<p>The building superintendent can check for leaks in the roof or pipes that are letting too much moisture into my apartment.</p>	<p>My landlady can tell the superintendent to check for leaks and can make sure that repairs are made.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other tenants in my building may also have mold problems.</li> <li>• My local health department may investigate if the problem seriously affects my family’s health and safety.</li> </ul>	<p>Right away:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell my landlady that my apartment is becoming moldy.</li> <li>• Ask other tenants whether they have mold problems too.</li> </ul> <p>If my landlady doesn’t respond soon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact my local health department.</li> </ul>

<b>What does my family need?</b> (Be as specific as possible)	<b>Resources</b>			<b>What can I do and when?</b>
	<b>Who can answer my questions?</b> (Include people and organizations)	<b>Who can help meet this need and how?</b> (Include people and organizations)	<b>What people and organizations share my concerns?</b>	



### Handout 3: Tips for Explaining Your Family’s Needs

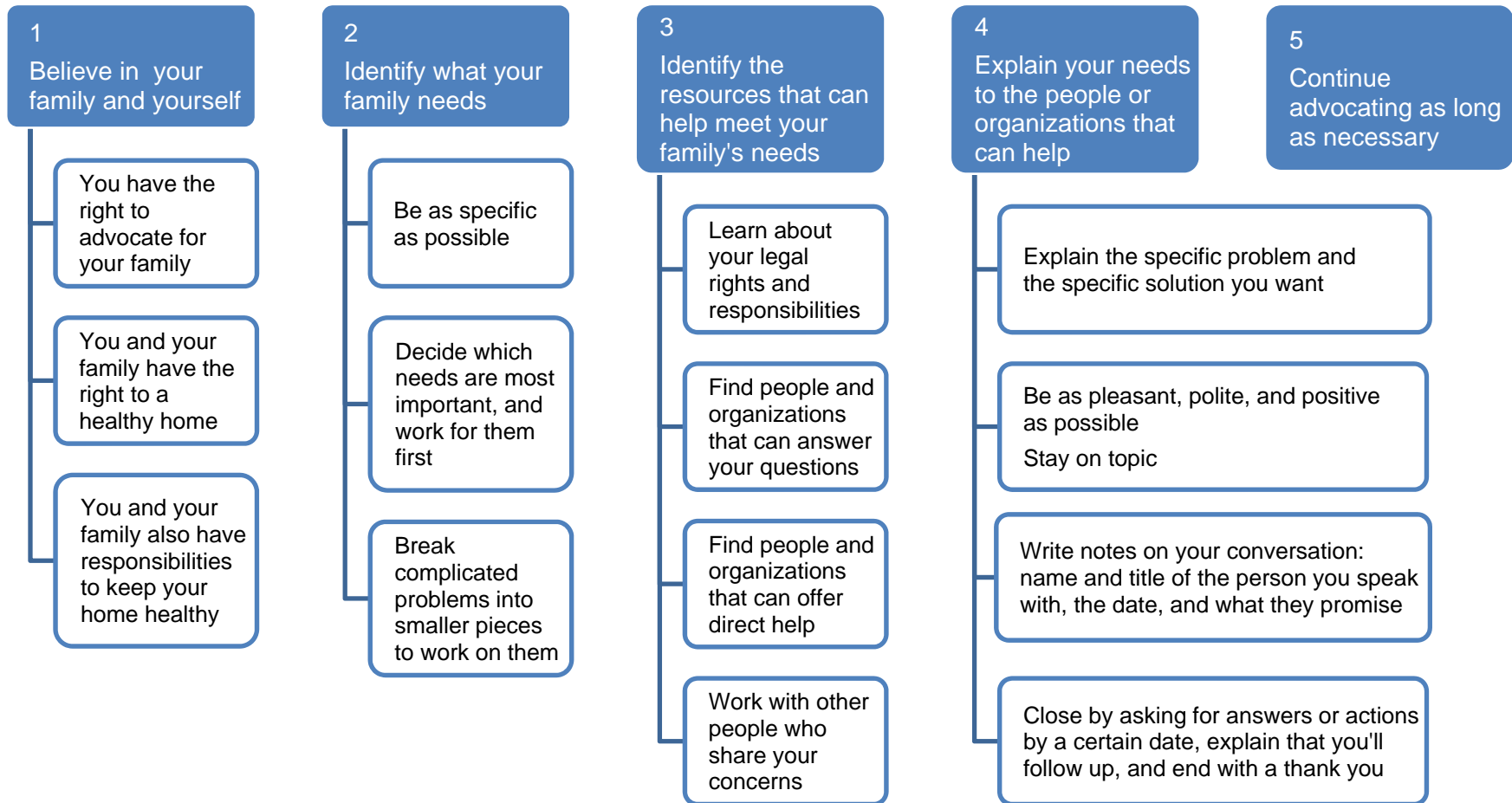
Tip	Example or Explanation	Your Example
<b>How to start the conversation</b>		
<p>Explain the problem as specifically as possible. (You may wish to make notes before your conversation to make sure you remember all the important points.)</p>	<p>“My daughter has asthma, and mold is one of her asthma triggers. In the past month, I’ve seen a lot of mold growing on her bedroom ceiling. I told my landlady about the problem several times. Although she said she’d think about it, she hasn’t done anything yet to fix the problem. My daughter is having more frequent asthma attacks, and I’m concerned that the mold is making her asthma worse.”</p>	
<p>Ask for a specific solution or help in solving the problem.</p>	<p>“I’d like to have a health department inspector check my apartment to see what can be done.”</p>	
<b>What approach to take</b>		
<p>Be as pleasant, polite, and positive as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a calm voice. If you feel angry, wait until you calm down before you start a conversation.</li> <li>• Use respectful words. Do not use bad language.</li> <li>• Be as firm as necessary about your family’s needs.</li> <li>• If you can be flexible about some issues, be flexible.</li> <li>• Do not threaten people.</li> </ul>	
<p>Keep the conversation on the topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can make a list of questions that you want answered. Make sure that you understand the answers to your questions.</li> <li>• Focus on the present and the future more than the past. What is the situation now, and what needs to be done? Talk about past events only if they help to explain the problem.</li> </ul>	

Tip	Example or Explanation	Your Example
<b>What information to record</b>		
<p>Write down notes on what a person tells you. Include this information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who the person is</li> <li>• What the person’s job or title is</li> <li>• The date of the conversation</li> <li>• What action, if any, the person promises to take</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Would you please spell your name for me?”</li> <li>• “I believe you said that you were the assistant to the health director. Is that right?”</li> <li>• May 10, 2011</li> <li>• “You said that you’d send a health inspector to check on the mold problem by the end of this week.”</li> </ul>	
<b>How to end the conversation</b>		
<p>Ask for action or answers to your questions by a certain date.</p>	<p>“Will you be able to schedule an inspection by the end of next week?”</p>	
<p>State that you will follow up by a certain date (and then do so).</p>	<p>“I’ll give you a call next Friday if I haven’t heard from you.”</p>	
<p>End with a thank you.</p>	<p>“Thanks for talking to me about the mold problem. I’m looking forward to hearing from you.”</p>	

## Handout 4: Tips for Advocating Effectively

Advocating for your family means standing up for your children and protecting them. It means making sure that your family's needs are met. Advocating is a skill you can learn.

You can use this handout to remind yourself of the five steps in advocating effectively.



## Handout 5 Activity for Children: I Believe in Myself

### Instructions for adults

Children can learn to advocate for themselves. They can learn the same important steps, starting with believing in themselves. Below is a rhyming activity to encourage your child to believe in his or her right to have a healthy home.

Cut out each row below. Then cut each row into boxes. Make a separate pile for each row. (The row numbers are in the bottom right corner, in case you get the cards mixed up.) You should have eight piles. Each pile has 5 boxes: four white and one blue. Set aside the blue boxes.

Tell your child that some white boxes talk about a healthy home. Your child's job will be to pick out the box or boxes that **talk about a healthy home**.

Start with Row 1. Help your child read each white box from that row. Ask your child to choose a box or boxes that talk about a healthy home. Then show your child the Row 1 blue card, which has a picture of the correct answer or answers. Don't worry or criticize if your child hasn't made the correct choice. Just reinforce the positive message: Your child deserves a healthy home.

Continue with the following rows. Continue reinforcing the positive messages.






After your child becomes familiar with this game, you can make it more challenging.

- You can mix up two or more rows of white cards and ask your child to pick out the ones that talk about a healthy home.
- You can make each row into a poem, and then make the poem into a song.

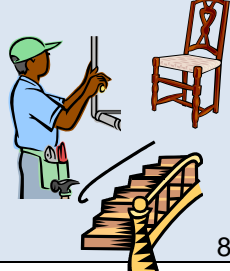




<p>Healthy home</p>  <p>1</p>	<p>I deserve a healthy home</p>  <p>1</p>	<p>I deserve a purple comb</p>  <p>1</p>	<p>I deserve a pizza from Rome</p>  <p>1</p>	<p>I deserve a wealthy gnome</p>  <p>1</p>
<p>Clean</p>  <p>2</p>	<p>I deserve a home that's clean</p>  <p>2</p>	<p>I deserve a jelly bean</p>  <p>2</p>	<p>I deserve to be a queen</p>  <p>2</p>	<p>I deserve a frog that's green</p>  <p>2</p>
<p>Dry</p>  <p>3</p>	<p>I deserve a home that's dry</p>  <p>3</p>	<p>I deserve some pumpkin pie</p>  <p>3</p>	<p>I deserve a starry sky</p>  <p>3</p>	<p>I deserve an old housefly</p>  <p>3</p>

<p>Fresh air</p>  <p>4</p>	<p>My home should have some clean fresh air</p>  <p>4</p>	<p>My home should have an ugly chair</p>  <p>4</p>	<p>My home should have a rotten pear</p>  <p>4</p>	<p>My home should have a sweet small mare</p>  <p>4</p>
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<p>No dangers from household products</p>  <p>5</p>	<p>My home should have no poisons for cleaning</p>  <p>5</p>	<p>My home should have a tower that's leaning</p>  <p>5</p>	<p>My home should have a tiger that's dreaming</p>  <p>5</p>	<p>My home should have a teapot that's steaming</p>  <p>5</p>
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<p>No pests</p>  <p>6</p>	<p>My home should have no nasty pests</p>  <p>6</p>	<p>My home should have no orange vests</p>  <p>6</p>	<p>My home should have no old bird nests</p>  <p>6</p>	<p>My home should have no bugs as guests</p>  <p>6</p>
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<p>Safe</p>  <p>Smoke detector</p> <p>7</p>	<p>I deserve a home that's safe</p>  <p>Smoke detector</p> <p>7</p>	<p>I deserve a tall giraffe</p>  <p>7</p>	<p>I deserve a big brown calf</p>  <p>7</p>	<p>I deserve an apple half</p>  <p>7</p>
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<p>Kept in repair</p>  <p>8</p>	<p>My home should be in good repair</p>  <p>8</p>	<p>My home should have a panda bear</p>  <p>8</p>	<p>My home should have no wobbly chair</p>  <p>8</p>	<p>My home should have no broken stair</p>  <p>8</p>
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## Handout 6 Activity for Children: Match: What do you need to have a healthy home?

**Instructions for adults**  
 Help your child cut apart the boxes below. Line up all the blue boxes. Mix up all the white boxes. Explain that the white boxes are examples of the things in the blue boxes. Ask your child to put each white box next to its matching blue box. Help your child to get the correct matches if necessary. You can use the pictures as clues.

<p>I need a home that is <b>dry</b></p> 	<p>Ceilings and walls aren't wet</p> 	<p>Wet spills get cleaned up right away</p> 	<p>No mold in the bathroom</p> 
<p>I need a home that is <b>clean</b></p> 	<p>Floor is swept often</p> 	<p>No dirty dishes in the sink overnight</p> 	<p>Doesn't have a lot of clutter</p> 
<p>I need a home that has <b>no pests</b></p> 	<p>Doesn't have cockroaches</p> 	<p>Doesn't have mice or rats</p> 	<p>Garbage cans have lids</p> 
<p>I need a home that has <b>fresh air</b></p> 	<p>Has a fan in the bathroom to blow air outside</p> 	<p>Has a fan in the kitchen to blow air outside</p> 	<p>Windows are open when weather is nice</p> 
<p>I need a home that has <b>no dangerous chemicals</b></p> 	<p>No smoking in the house</p> 	<p>Use safe cleaning supplies</p> 	<p>No dangerous bug sprays</p> 
<p>I need a home that is <b>safe</b></p> 	<p>Has a smoke detector</p> 	<p>No cleaning products where kids can reach them</p> 	<p>No guns where kids can reach them</p> 
<p>I need a home that is <b>taken care of</b></p> 	<p>Paint isn't peeling</p> 	<p>Leaking pipes get fixed right away</p> 	<p>No holes in the walls</p> 

## Home visitor’s follow-up and feedback notes

Please fill in this form after you have completed the lesson and observed any follow-up activities. This training is a pilot program, so we welcome your comments and suggestions on how to improve it. Please return this page to the Head Start Family Services Coordinator.

Learner’s response to this lesson																												
Did the learner find the topic	Please check the box that most closely applies																											
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Interesting</td> <td style="width: 5%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 5%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 5%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 5%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 5%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 5%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 5%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 50%;">Boring</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Easy to understand</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Difficult to understand</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Useful</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Useless</td> </tr> </table>	Interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boring	Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to understand	Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useless
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Please summarize the learner’s plans to make changes as a result of this topic.																												
Please identify any questions the learner had that were not covered in the topic.																												
Please summarize any changes the learner actually made as a result of this topic.																												
Please list the activities that the learner did with his or her child and any comments about those activities.																												
Your feedback on this lesson																												
What was the most useful part of this lesson?																												
What was the least useful part of this lesson?																												
Do you have any suggestions for improving this lesson?																												
Additional comments																												

Your name:

Date:

Topic:           Advocating for a healthy home