



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
THE ADMINISTRATOR

OCT 20 1995

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: New Policy on Evaluating Health Risks to Children

TO: Assistant Administrators
General Counsel
Inspector General
Associate Administrators
Regional Administrators

We are establishing a new Agency-wide policy (attached) that will, for the first time, ensure that we consistently and explicitly evaluate environmental health risks of infants and children in all of the risk assessments, risk characterizations, and environmental and public health standards that we set for the nation.

This is not a new idea to the many programs throughout the Agency that currently consider children's health issues in assessing overall risk. This is, however, a major step forward in establishing a consistent nationwide children's environmental health policy. We know that children have a greater potential for exposure to environmental hazards and our assessments of health risks do not always fully take into account the potential effects on this vulnerable population. The National Academy of Sciences has called for policy changes to reflect children's health factors in evaluating environmental risks.

Our new policy answers that call for change and, in doing so, will allow us to make better public health decisions that reflect not just data on adults, but on children whenever possible. By making children a health priority, we expect that this policy will encourage new, much-needed research to provide the child-specific data we will need to thoroughly evaluate the health risks children and infants face from pollution in our air, land, and water. In the long run, healthier children mean healthier adults - a great benefit for the nation.

The policy set forth in this memorandum takes effect November 1, 1995, and is sponsored by the Agency's Science Policy Council, which is charged with evaluating science policy issues of Agency-wide importance. We are confident that each of your offices will work with the Council to ensure a smooth transition to this new policy that is so important to our nation's future.

/s/
Carol M. Browner
Administrator

/s/
Fred Hansen
Deputy Administrator

Attachment