



# How to Plan an Asthma Education Event in Your School

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for staff, parents, and students at a local school. To do this, you will need the support of the school or district administration, school nurse, and other key staff. Things to do include:

### ▼ Plan asthma educational activities at the school:

- ▶ Offer asthma education on environmental asthma triggers and management during in-service days for teachers, custodians, and other school staff;
- ▶ Offer asthma education for parents at local PTA/PTO meetings or other similar events;
- ▶ Read children's books on asthma to students, such as *Taking Asthma to School*, *Zoo Allergy*, and *The ABC's of Asthma*, by Kim Gosselin;
- ▶ Show the Arthur® video, "Buster's Breathless;"
- ▶ Arrange a school-wide assembly with guest speakers, such as kids with asthma, local celebrities, TV personalities, or local doctors or politicians;
- ▶ Organize an asthma poster contest for children;
- ▶ Coordinate with the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) to launch a *Power Breathing* Program for middle and high school students with asthma;
- ▶ Sponsor a staff breakfast or lunch and introduce the *Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools* Program;
- ▶ Design asthma awareness bulletin boards or other displays for students and staff;
- ▶ Encourage teachers to incorporate asthma and the environment into appropriate curricula, e.g., science and health;
- ▶ Include asthma awareness information in school newsletters and other packets sent home to parents/guardians; and
- ▶ Conduct a walkthrough of your school to determine if asthma triggers exist. If triggers are found, a remediation plan should be developed and implemented as soon as possible. See the *IAQ Tools for Schools* Kit for assistance.

▼ **Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Potential sponsors include area businesses and organizations—such as the local chapter of the American Lung Association (ALA) or AAFA—that may assist in asthma events or trainings.**

▼ **Publicize your event(s) and Asthma Awareness Month on the school bulletin board or Web site, in the school newsletter, in state and local education association newsletters and Web sites, flyers, PTA announcements, local newspapers, and local media.**

### Event Spotlight: Asthma Presentation at Rincon Elementary School



#### Where and when did the event take place?

The cafeteria at Rincon Elementary School in Rincon, Georgia, on April 30, 2007

#### What happened at the event?

Rincon's school nurse gave a presentation on asthma to 100 third graders. She explained what asthma is, asthma triggers, and how it can be treated. She also showed the students a nebulizer, inhalers, and other asthma-related items from the school health clinic. The children viewed an asthma bulletin board and received All About Asthma coloring sheets.

#### What resources were used for the event?

EPA's Asthma Awareness Month Event Planning Kit and Web site; the All About Asthma module of the Arthur Health Curriculum; nebulizer and inhalers from the school health clinic.

#### How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

Learning about asthma triggers and seeing the nebulizer and inhalers helped the children understand that they don't need to be scared of asthma because there are ways to control it.

## How to Plan an Asthma Education Event in Your School *(continued)*

### And remember...

- ▼ **Asthma educational materials are available for students, teachers, nurses, school officials, parents, and the community. The following are some of EPA's materials that are available to you at no cost:**
  - ▶ "Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers" brochure;
  - ▶ "Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge" brochure and poster;
  - ▶ "Dusty and His Asthma Triggers" children's funbook – available in English and Spanish;
  - ▶ "Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers" video – available in English and Spanish;
  - ▶ "Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" – available in English and Spanish.



## Ten Ways to Manage Asthma in the School Environment

### 1 Use the *IAQ Tools for Schools Kit*

- ▶ Improve the school environment with IAQ practices recommended in this Kit. To order the free Kit, go to [www.epa.gov/iaq/schools](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools).

### 2 Control Animal Allergens

- ▶ Remove warm-blooded animals from the classroom and school.

### 3 Control Cockroach Allergens

- ▶ Use integrated pest management practices to prevent cockroach and other pest problems (e.g., store food in tightly sealed containers and place dumpsters away from the building).

### 4 Clean Up Mold and Control Moisture

- ▶ Fix moisture problems and thoroughly dry wet areas within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- ▶ Clean up hard, moldy surfaces with water and detergent, and then dry thoroughly.

### 5 Eliminate Secondhand Smoke Exposure

- ▶ Enforce no-smoking policies in the school.

### 6 Reduce Dust Mite Exposure

- ▶ Make sure the school is dusted and vacuumed thoroughly and regularly.

### 7 Develop an Asthma Management Plan

- ▶ Include school policies on inhaler and other medication usage and emergency procedures for school staff to follow for asthma attacks.
- ▶ Make sure students with asthma obtain and turn in copies of their Asthma Action Cards to teachers, the school nurse, etc.

- ▶ Encourage students to identify and manage their asthma triggers.
- ▶ Obtain the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program's *Managing Asthma: A Guide for Schools* at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov).

### 8 Provide School-Based Asthma Education Programs

- ▶ Contact your local American Lung Association about *Open Airways for Schools*, a school-based asthma management program for students age 8-11.
- ▶ Contact the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America about *Asthma Care Training for Kids and Parents*, an education program for kids age 7-12.

### 9 Reduce School Bus Diesel Exhaust

- ▶ Replace the oldest buses in the fleet with new ones.
- ▶ Install effective emission control systems on newer buses.
- ▶ Encourage policies and practices to eliminate unnecessary school bus idling.
- ▶ Visit [www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus](http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus) to learn more about EPA's Clean School Bus USA Program.

### 10 Gather Additional Asthma Resources

- ▶ Establish a complete file on existing asthma and allergy-related information sources to reference throughout the school year.
- ▶ Ask the National Association of School Nurses to offer their course, *Managing Asthma Triggers*, to nurses in your district. Visit [www.nasn.org](http://www.nasn.org) to learn more.
- ▶ Visit EPA's asthma Web site at [www.epa.gov/asthma](http://www.epa.gov/asthma).