

# Controlling Asthma in Schools:

## Successes of CDC's National Asthma Control Program



**CDC's National Asthma Control Program (NACP) is doing important work to help children with asthma. We're supporting initiatives across the country to provide comprehensive asthma control in school settings — and ultimately create more asthma-friendly schools.**

In the United States, 1 out of 12 children has asthma — and it's a leading cause of school absenteeism, causing more than 10 million missed days of school every year. NACP works to support students with asthma, so they can miss fewer school days and participate in more school activities.

Working with CDC Healthy Schools, NACP has developed strategies to help asthma programs, school personnel, and partners work together to create asthma-friendly schools. Asthma-friendly schools (AFS) are safe and supportive environments for children with asthma where school policies and practices help students better manage their asthma. NACP funds 25 state and territorial asthma programs to help them:

- Strengthen school health services and school-based programs to manage chronic diseases like asthma
- Use evidence-based strategies to promote comprehensive asthma control
- Encourage collaboration between the public health and health care sectors
- Identify schools with high health-risk students who may benefit from asthma management programs.

Learn more about evidence-based strategies to address asthma in schools — and how state asthma programs are successfully implementing them:

### Provide Asthma Education for Students

**Asthma self-management education (AS-ME)** teaches children with asthma and their caregivers how to monitor symptoms, manage medications to prevent asthma attacks, and respond to asthma-related problems. Many state asthma programs provide training to school nurses or school-based health center staff to deliver AS-ME to their students.

**Strategy in action:** The Missouri Asthma Prevention and Control Program (MAPCP) implemented Teaming Up for Asthma Control (TUAC) in 2014 to train school nurses to provide asthma education, measure lung capacity, and assess inhalation technique in students with persistent asthma. After the program, students' lung capacity improved significantly, and they reported fewer asthma-related problems and less tobacco smoke exposure. MAPCP now trains 75 school nurses a year in school systems throughout Missouri.



### Provide Asthma Education for School Staff and Caregivers

State asthma programs and their partners work together to **create professional development and training opportunities** for school district staff, administrators, teachers, parents, and coaches to learn about asthma and indoor air quality.



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Controlling Asthma in Schools Continued

**Strategy in action:** The Illinois Asthma Program funds the Respiratory Health Association (RHA) to educate caregivers through its educational series, *Asthma Management*. From September 2016 to February 2017, RHA educated 1,319 adult caregivers, including school staff and parents, in school districts across Chicago and Cook County.

## Improve Indoor Air Quality and Reduce Asthma Triggers

State asthma programs support trainings and implementation of programs to **help schools reduce indoor asthma triggers and improve indoor air quality** — including the Environmental Protection Agency’s Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) — Tools for Schools program. *IAQ Tools For Schools* is an action kit that provides guidance and tools to ensure good air quality in schools.

**Strategy in action:** The Vermont Asthma Program works with the Envision Program at the Vermont Department of Health to offer school walkthroughs using a modified version of *IAQ Tools for Schools*. Vermont’s approach teaches schools how to reduce asthma triggers by enforcing 24/7 tobacco-free policies, creating integrated pest management plans, and using environmentally friendly cleaning products.

## Link Students to Medical Care

State asthma programs **help schools connect students with clinical care** in a variety of ways, including giving school nurses access to electronic health record (EHR) systems, developing and using asthma action plans in schools, and offering training and technical assistance to school-based health centers. CDC Healthy Schools also funds states to **strengthen school health services** that help to manage chronic conditions like asthma.

**Strategy in action:** The New Mexico Asthma Control Program (NMACP) partners with University of New Mexico Envision school-based health centers to support schools in providing comprehensive asthma control activities. As a result, an asthma action plan has been added to the school-based health center EHR. The program also sponsors school nurses to attend the UNM Summer Asthma Institute, where they train to become certified asthma educators.

## Create Asthma-Friendly Schools

State asthma programs work closely with school districts and other state agencies to **ensure that schools and communities address asthma in a coordinated way**. Several state asthma programs have begun Asthma-Friendly School programs, offering awards and recognition to schools with policies and practices that promote the well-being of students with asthma.

**Strategy in action:** The Florida Asthma Program promoted an Asthma-Friendly Schools Recognition Program across the state, focusing on schools in areas with high rates of emergency department visits and hospitalizations for asthma. Nurses led professional development courses for faculty and staff, and taught asthma self-management education for students, parents, and caregivers. They also promoted policies for 100% tobacco-free schools, student access to medicines, improved indoor air quality, and appropriate physical education for students with asthma.



## Allow Students to Carry Medicine and Have Schools Stock Albuterol

All 50 states have passed laws permitting students to self-carry their asthma medication while at school. Many state asthma programs provide guidance to school districts on policies to stock albuterol to treat emergency asthma attacks.

### To learn more about NACP’s work in schools:

- Read the [Strategies for Addressing Asthma in Schools](#) booklet
- Visit NACP’s website at <https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/nacp.htm>
- Visit CDC’s Healthy Schools website at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/index.htm>