

ts of mold? Is there radon in my house? Do I need to eat organic food during pregnancy? Which brand of  
What is TCE? Should I worry about arsenic in rice? What's causing my child's asthma? Is the school contam  
checked for lead?

New York State Is it okay to eat fish? Are plastics harmful? Is fracking dange

## Centers of Excellence in Children's Environmental Health

*Dedicated to the Health and Well-Being of Children in NYS*

Children's health has changed for the better. Thanks to public health innovations, infectious diseases are no longer the primary cause of morbidity and mortality. But, today's children are afflicted with chronic diseases that start in childhood (and often evolve into adulthood) with debilitating effects on not just the children themselves, but their families and communities.

Environmental factors play a dominant role. The World Health Organization, estimates environmental exposures are responsible for 35% of all childhood disease and deaths worldwide.<sup>5</sup> The cost of environmental disease in New York State is over \$4 billion per year.<sup>6</sup>

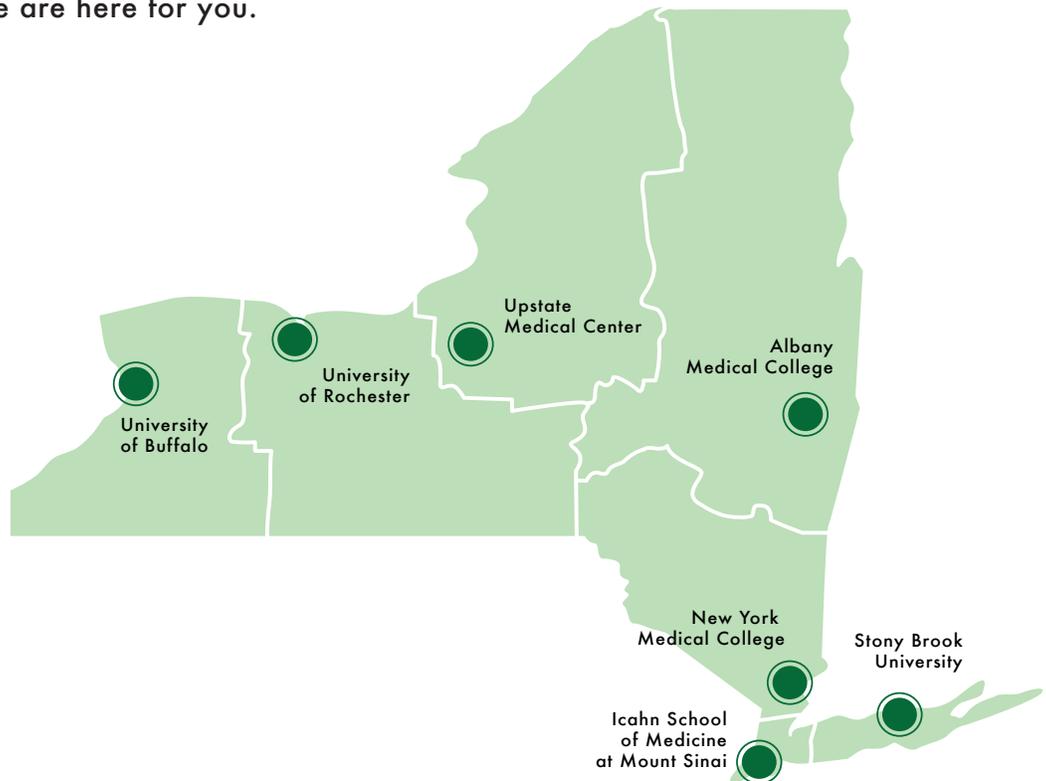
Many of the environmental exposures that cause illness can be prevented by established, cost-effective interventions.

The Centers of Excellence in Children's Environmental Health are a statewide network of health professionals whose mission is to protect and improve the health of children across New York State.

We provide a range of services to the communities throughout the state, offering evidence-based guidance on questions pertaining to environmental factors and children's health; educational outreach; timely messaging on acute health events such as natural disasters and wide-scale exposures; and collaboration on community-level issues. We work with clinical care teams to ensure comprehensive, coordinated care for diseases of environmental origin.

We work with children, parents, educators, health providers, legislators, children's agencies, schools, community advocates, and media professionals.

We are here for you.



**Question? Call us: 1-866-265-6201 (toll free)**

What is chelation? Should I get treatment for asbestos? Who should I call for

Do I need to worry about noise? Should I get my child tested for endocrine disruptors? Are learning disorder

How can I find resources in my own community? What is the built environment? Can toxicants affect IQ?





# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the “environment”?

When it comes to the health of children, the environment is everything the child interacts with: the air, the water, the products and chemicals of our daily lives. Even more pervasively, a child’s health depends on the effects of the social environment, the qualities of the neighborhood, the economic and educational opportunities, et al.<sup>1-4</sup>

That’s a lot for a parent to think about, especially when trustworthy information is hard to find. Is my daughter’s asthma caused by something in my home? Is my son’s autism caused by chemicals in the products we use? The Centers are here to help.

## What do these Centers actually do?

The Centers provide services across New York State for children, parents, educators, health providers, legislators, children’s agencies, schools, community advocates and media professionals.

Each Center comprises a team of health professionals who provide a range of services: evidence-based guidance on questions pertaining to environmental factors and children’s health; educational outreach; timely messaging on acute health events (for example natural disasters or wide-scale exposures); and collaboration on community-level issues involving multiple stakeholders. The Centers also provide clinical care (diagnosis, treatment and referrals) when indicated for diseases of environmental origin.

On a statewide level the network collaborates to improve the health of children through research, advocacy and prevention.

## Are environmental health problems really that prevalent?

**Asthma** rates have tripled in the past three decades, becoming the leading cause of emergency room visits, hospitalizations and school absenteeism.<sup>7,8</sup> Air pollutants, mold and cigarette smoke all contribute.

One of every six American children has a **developmental disorder** such as **ADHD, dyslexia** or **intellectual disability**.<sup>1</sup> One in 88 is diagnosed with **autism**.<sup>9</sup> Heavy metals, PCBs, and organophosphate pesticides are all implicated.

**Primary brain cancer** among 0 to 14 year olds increased by nearly 40% from 1975 to 2004, according to the National Cancer Institute.<sup>10</sup> Benzene and other solvents and pesticides are linked.

**Childhood obesity** has quadrupled for young children in the past ten years, and **type 2 diabetes**, previously unknown among children, is becoming epidemic.<sup>11</sup> The evidence supporting the role of the built environment along with chemical toxicants is growing.

**Lead poisoning** acutely affects more than 2200 children in NYS per year.<sup>12</sup> Even at low levels, the chronic effects can cause brain damage, with loss of intelligence, disruption of behavior and shortened attention.

Measurable levels of 200 **high-production-volume (HPV) chemicals** are present in the bodies of virtually all Americans. A strong and growing body of scientific evidence links these chemicals to disease in children.

## Why here in New York State, and why now?

New York State already benefits from a statewide network of occupational health clinics for adults: this network was critical in the medical responses to 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy. Groundwork for a companion network for children was laid in 2005 with pilot funding from the state. *Recent legislative efforts offer an opportunity to bring the children’s network to full and sustainable operation.*

This network will be the first of its kind in the U.S., and will make New York a definitive leader in children’s environmental health. Treating and preventing diseases of environmental origin is imperative if we are to protect children—the most vulnerable segment of our population.

## How do I contact a Center with my question?

Visit [NYSCHECK.org](http://NYSCHECK.org) (pronounced “nice check”) to find the Center nearest you, or call us at 1-866-265-6201 (toll free).

*“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”*

Frederick Douglass

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