



2006

Children's Environmental Health  
Recognition Award



# Who's In Charge of Children's Environmental Health in Schools

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**Children's National Medical Center**



**Child Health  
Advocacy Institute**

**Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health & the Environment - MACCHE**

[www.childrensnational.org](http://www.childrensnational.org)

# Not Going to Talk About



- Indoor air quality
- Lighting
- Pests and pesticides
- Noise
- Radon
- Asbestos
- Lead
- PCBs
- Drinking water contamination
- Cleaning processes and products
- Siting problems



# School Buildings



- No 21<sup>st</sup> century data about the status of school buildings
- In late 1990s, average school building 42 years old
- Much deferred maintenance



# Other Issues & Data Collection



- No systematic collection of data related to health or environmental issues
  - DEd
  - DHHS – CDC – National Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Environmental Health
  - EPA
- Makes recognition of new problems difficult
- Makes evaluation of problems and interventions difficult or impossible.
- Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)



# Formulating Public Policy Related to Schools in the US



- Constitution leaves responsibility for education to the states.
- Federal Department of Education – does not regulate children’s health & safety in schools (Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools)
- Federal Department of Health & Human Services (CDC) – does not regulate children’s health & safety in schools



# Formulating Public Policy Related to Schools in the US



- States responsible for providing public education
- State educational agencies without regulatory power related to environmental health
- State often delegates authority for education to local school districts
  - May be an agency independent of other components of local government and with own taxing authority
  - Generally does not interface with state or local health or environmental departments
  - Does not have internal expertise in environmental health



# Protection of Adults



- Occupational Safety & Health Act of 1970 (Federal)
  - Public sector workers not covered by federal law
  - 25 states with own occupational safety and health program
- Union
- State departments of Labor
- Worker's compensation programs
- Other
  - Call in sick
  - Change schools



# Protection of Children



- Most pediatricians not trained to identify or deal with environmental health problems
- Evaluation of school-based environmental health problems – multi-pronged approach
  - Pediatrician – for child
  - Industrial hygienist – for building
  - Facilities management experts – for specific systems in buildings





# Conclusions



- Need 1 Federal agency to establish a program n school environmental health
  - Data collection
    - Modify or adapt FERPA to facilitate this
  - Develop a coordinated federal strategy for the states to help their schools rapidly improve facility design, construction, and maintenance
  - Set up programs to test and remediate for hazards and to phase in safer products.
  - Fund and conduct research
  - Develop and enforce REGULATIONS
- Utilize PEHSUs to inspect schools and develop remediation and management plans





# QUESTIONS?

