

Call to action: What can we do?

Air pollution is harmful in early childhood. And there is plenty that you can do about it, depending on your level of interest, capacity and influence. However, keep in mind that the list of actions here are by no means prescriptive or definitive.

Everyone:

Parents, caregivers, childcare workers, preschool workers and the general public.



- ☐ **Take individual actions to reduce air pollution exposure.** Pay extra attention to air pollution exposure for young children in your care and remove children from these sources where possible. Every little reduction in exposure to air pollution helps. Examples:
 - ☐ Switch to clean (smokeless) cooking and heating options
 - ☐ Do not smoke around pregnant women and children
 - ☐ Avoid taking children through polluted areas
 - ☐ Reduce open burning or any activity that generates smoke, e.g., trash burning
 - ☐ Make sure your vehicle does not produce excessive emissions
 - ☐ Monitor the local air quality data in your community. Heed public health advisories according to the air quality level alerts.
 - ☐ When pollution is generated indoors—for example through incense burning—open the windows to let the smoke out. When pollution is heavier outdoors, close the windows and turn on an air purifier.
- ☐ **Share your knowledge** on air pollution with your family, peers and networks. The more people know about the problem, the more we can work together to drive change. One immediate action: You can forward this fact sheet and our social media messages to your network.

Advocates:

Parent advocacy groups, youths, managers in early child development settings, civil society, local governments.



- ☐ **Facilitate innovative initiatives to involve young children** in understanding the importance of clean air and a clean environment. Examples: nature-based activities, art or storytelling competitions, science experiments
- ☐ **Organize community-based events and campaigns** to inform families about the risks of air pollution and influence government stakeholders to take climate and clean air action. Examples:
 - ☐ Start a local community advocacy network
 - ☐ Organize a local campaign (e.g. Raise awareness about a key source of air pollution in your community)
 - ☐ Join existing parent advocacy efforts (e.g., Warrior Moms India, Our Kids Climate) or youth groups (e.g. Youth empowerment in climate action platform, YOUNGO)
- ☐ **Advocate for the integration of climate and air pollution issues and strategies** in early childhood settings. Examples:
 - ☐ Reflect air pollution and climate in educational programs (or curricula) aimed at parents and children to empower them to take personal and collective action
 - ☐ Convene parents and early childhood development workers to discuss ways of managing suspensions or disruptions to early child development services due to poor air quality
 - ☐ Advocate for ways to ensure well-ventilated learning spaces, including retrofitting buildings and monitoring air quality
- ☐ **Support citizen-generated localized air quality data, research and innovation.** This can build understanding of young children's exposure to pollution sources, patterns and impacts to inform air pollution mitigation strategies. Examples:
 - ☐ Encourage partnerships between early child development providers and air quality scientists and research institutions involved in air quality
 - ☐ Convene learning initiatives to learn from cities and countries that have established good air quality management and monitoring systems

Influential stakeholders:

Development partners,
private sector funders,
philanthropists,
policymakers.



☐ **Promote the link with air pollution in climate policies and mitigation strategies.** Examples:

- ☐ Encourage climate goals and funding to be funneled into air pollution mitigation, achieving win-win solutions for climate and human health
- ☐ Advocate for solutions that address both climate and health. These include energy efficiency, reforestation, renewable energy (wind, solar, tidal), walkability, low-emission vehicles.

☐ **Advocate for greater financing and investments** in air pollution and climate mitigation efforts by familiarizing policymakers with key information. Examples:

- ☐ Only 1% of international development and 2% of international climate finance tackles outdoor air pollution.
- ☐ Health and socioeconomic analysis should be integrated in policy interventions. Air pollution reduction policies and interventions may appear costly initially, but the case for investment is strong taking into consideration clean air's health benefits and cost savings.
- ☐ U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child's adoption on General Comment 26 affirming children's rights to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, including the effects of climate change.

☐ **Enforce and implement specific policies that will reduce air pollution.**

Examples:

- ☐ Establish subsidy programs for clean household energy
- ☐ Set up an air quality management program
- ☐ Enforce a ban on open burning
- ☐ Develop and enforce vehicle emission standards

☐ **Increase strategic partnerships** between civil society, governments, and the private sector to advance change collectively on air pollution and climate mitigation. Examples:

- ☐ Establish a platform to connect early childhood development policymakers and practitioners with the environmental health and climate science community
- ☐ Convene communities via civil society with academia, governments and decision-makers to advocate for locally led solutions
- ☐ Support and fund youth and child-led organizations at the forefront of tackling air pollution and climate
- ☐ Strengthen regional coordination and cooperation to tackle air pollution, including via regional transboundary haze efforts

Key References

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