

## How is your school's Indoor Air Quality?

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Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) is an important issue for schools in Georgia and across the country. Almost 20 percent of the U.S. population-nearly 55 million people-spend their days inside elementary and secondary schools. In Georgia, there are some 2,032 public elementary, middle and high schools enrolling some 1.5 million students.

In 1999, the National Center for Education Statistics reported one in five schools in the United States had unsatisfactory indoor air quality. Ventilation problems were cited in about one-quarter of the schools surveyed.



## What can cause IAQ problems in your school?

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IAQ problems in a school are caused by a host of factors. School problems can range from improper building repair and maintenance to outdated ventilation systems. Also, fumes generated from pesticide applications, cleaning activities and vehicles idling can impact IAQ.

Recently, schools have placed an emphasis on reducing exposure to mold by addressing factors that lead to its growth in the indoor environment.



## How can improving the school's IAQ help your children?

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Studies suggest that improving ventilation and thermal comfort while reducing pollutant sources in schools will enhance student performance. Poor IAQ results in increased absenteeism of students and staff with allergies, asthma and other medical conditions.

Asthma episodes are one of the most significant health impacts associated with poor IAQ in schools. Asthma triggers such as: dust mites, mold, and pests may all be found in the school environment. These triggers can become a problem if conditions supporting their growth and survival are uncorrected.

- In Georgia, nearly 210,000 children have asthma. Asthma is more common in children age 5-12 years old.

- In 2000, Georgia children missed an estimated 540,000 school days due to asthma.

## How can we help improve IAQ at your school?

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For a proven and practical IAQ solution, we recommend schools use the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools (IAQ TfS) Action Kit*. The EPA, IAQ TfS Action Kit can serve as a guide for initiating an IAQ program or as a supplement to an existing one.

The Georgia Department of Human Resources, Environmental Health Section, is available to provide an overview of the EPA, IAQ TfS Action Kit and its practical benefits. We can also assist in the implementation of the program in your school.

The EPA developed the IAQ TfS Action Kit to help schools prevent, identify and resolve IAQ problems through simple, low cost actions. Using these measures will help improve your school's IAQ by:

- Reducing IAQ-related health risks and triggers for asthma.
- Identifying potential IAQ sources.
- Increasing teachers and staff IAQ awareness.
- Improving comfort and performance.
- Avoiding costly repairs or remediation.



## How do you use the Indoor Air Quality Tools for School Action Kit?

The EPA, IAQ TfS Action Kit is structured for school personnel to administer with minimum cost and/or additional training. The kit provides background information on relevant school IAQ issues and uses step-by-step checklists for evaluating the school facilities.

The key to using the EPA, IAQ TfS Action Kit is ensuring a team approach is adopted to coordinate and manage the process. Teachers and staff members (e.g. school nurse, janitor, maintenance supervisor, administrative staff and cafeteria personnel) are vital parts of the program.

## Resources and agencies

■ Asthma in Georgia, School Resource Manual, Georgia Division of Public Health, Health Promotion Section

<http://www.ph.dhr.state.ga.us/programs/chronic>

■ IAQ Tools for Georgia's Schools, University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Science Extension  
[http://www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/housing/iaq\\_prog.html](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/housing/iaq_prog.html)

■ School Environmental Health Issues, U.S. EPA, Healthy School Environments  
[www.epa.gov/schools](http://www.epa.gov/schools)

■ Open Airways for Schools, American Lung Association of Georgia, 1-(800)-586-4872 or [www.alaga.org](http://www.alaga.org)



To order an IAQ TfS Action Kit contact:

**USEPA Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse at 1-800-438-4318**

Or for more information contact:

**Georgia Division of Public Health  
Environmental Health Section  
2 Peachtree Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
Phone: 404-657-6534  
Fax: 404-657-6533**

Visit the EPA, IAQ TfS web site:  
[www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/) or email:

[gdphinfo@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:gdphinfo@dhr.state.ga.us)

Sources: Benefits of Improving Air Quality in the School Environment, USEPA and The Burden of Asthma in Georgia 2002, Georgia Department of Human Resources  
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## What Can We Do about Indoor Air Quality in Our School?



**Georgia Department of Human Resources  
Division of Public Health  
Environmental Health and Injury Prevention Branch**