
ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Toronto Public Health (TPH) has a longstanding interest in how the City's biophysical and built environment affects the health of its children. Our vision is that all of Toronto's children, as well as future generations of children, should enjoy the highest achievable level of health and well-being. This vision recognizes that the determinants of health are complex, and include potent influences such as safe and nutritious food, adequate shelter, education, financial resources, peace, equity and social justice. However, this vision also recognizes the importance of a healthy sustainable ecosystem in which children are protected from environmental hazards. As a result, Toronto Public Health embarked on studies to understand what needed to be done to better protect the health of children (TPH, 1999a).

In 2001, TPH conducted a Needs Assessment Framework Study which provided a broad outline and strategy for assessing information needs and mapping out future planning and evaluation of public health strategies to address children's environmental health issues (TPH, 2002b). In 2002, TPH implemented a survey to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Toronto parents regarding various environmental hazards (TPH, 2002c). Through these early studies and the involvement of representatives from leading health and environmental organizations, the Environmental Protection Office of TPH became a founding member of the *Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment* (CPCHE). CPCHE's overall goals include moving children's environmental health (CEH) issues into mainstream decision-making in Canada, promoting CEH issues among caregivers, health professionals and the public, increasing awareness about how to prevent harm by adapting the "childproofing" theme for a major health promotion campaign, and coordinating activities and creating efficiencies among the partners. From seven founding organizations, CPCHE has grown to a mature organization, active in healthy public policy and educational outreach to parents and caregivers.

The current report expands on the results and recommendations of TPH's earlier studies. It discusses the wider topic and context of environment and child health and while it focuses on key issues for Toronto the information summarized is relevant to urban children elsewhere in Canada. Adding to the results of the Needs Assessment Framework Study, this report completes a baseline assessment of the state of knowledge of child health and environment issues in Toronto. From this assessment, the report culminates in key strategic directions for future action.

The research was conducted in a collaborative manner by a team of external consultants and public health staff. An advisory committee of experts and

practitioners, including several from among the CPCHE partners, guided the project and preparation of this technical report. This report has benefited additionally from an external peer review.

This TPH report is the technical companion piece for CPCHE's flagship educational resource, **Child Health and the Environment – A Primer**. The CPCHE Primer and associated fact sheets for the public serve as a shorter, plain language version of the present document.