

# Diesel Danger

## Reducing Children's Exposure to Diesel Exhaust from School Buses

(Although this project is funded in part by the Environmental Protection Agency, it does not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the EPA)



Diesel exhaust consists of the black smoke that we see, but also of particulate matter (PM), specks of solid or liquid matter, including dust, ash and soot. Particulate matter, especially with particles of 2.5 microns or smaller, has been linked to such health problems as asthma attacks and possible asthma onset, coughing and difficulty breathing, chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function, heart attacks, stroke and premature death, including crib death in children. Children, the elderly and people with existing respiratory ailments are especially sensitive to particulate matter.

### Why are children at increased risk?

- Their developing bodies are less capable of defending themselves against pollutants, such as fine particulates, which can lodge deep in the lungs
- Children typically have a faster metabolism, and breathe at twice the rate of an adult, thereby receiving and retaining greater doses of pollution
- Children tend to breathe through their mouths, bypassing the natural filtration protection of the nose
- Children tend to spend more time outdoors, esp. when air pollution levels are at their peak
- Children are typically shorter, making them closer to the ground where many pollutants collect
- Diesel exhaust is believed to exacerbate asthmatic conditions, and while kids make up only 25% of the population, they account for nearly 40% of all asthma cases.



### Did you know Allegheny County has a new School Bus Idling Regulation?

This regulation means school buses, most of which are diesel, can't idle for more than five minutes, unless it is below 40°F or above 75°F, at which temperatures they can't idle for more than 20 minutes in an hour.

To view the entire regulation, with exemptions visit <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/action/schoolbusidling.pdf>

If you see a school bus idling for more than the allotted time contact the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-687-2243 or your individual municipality.

Group Against Smog and Pollution is making visits to Parent Teacher Associations and other groups, distributing toolkits to educate citizens about the importance of this regulation and how you can help enforce it. Please call GASP at 412-325-7382 to schedule your presentation or discuss concerns.



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