



Public Transit & Children's Health in Indiana

Special Points of Interest

- Scientific studies show a direct correlation between asthma prevalence in children and traffic density.
- There is a 42% increase in child emergency room visits for asthma attacks during peak traffic levels.
- Asthma is the 3rd leading cause of hospitalization among Indiana children.
- 136,202 children in Indiana have asthma (1 in 13).
- Public transit reduces traffic density and prevalence of asthma in children.
- 29.9% of Indiana children are overweight or obese.
- Public transit decreases sedentary behavior by reducing the number of hours children spend sitting in cars.

Expansion of Public Transit Reduces Asthma

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, transportation related pollutants are one of the "largest contributors to unhealthy air quality." Traffic emissions are scientifically linked to many adverse health effects in children including: exacerbation of asthma symptoms, diminished lung function, adverse birth outcomes, and childhood cancer.

Studies have found a 42% increase in the number of children visiting the emergency room for asthma attacks during peak traffic levels. Additionally, a recent study including 10 major European cities

determined that 14% of asthma diagnosis in children resulted from exposure to traffic congestion.

Traffic congestion disproportionately affects African American and Latino children who live in urban areas. Building a better public transit system will reduce traffic congestion and help eliminate these asthma disparities. Public transportation reduces traffic congestion and emissions which in turn reduces instances of children developing asthma and bronchitis.

Public Transit Reduces the Prevalence of Childhood Obesity

A direct link has been found between increased prevalence of childhood obesity and the amount of time children spend in cars. Studies have found that each hour a child spends in the car per day is associated with a 6% increase in obesity. Conversely, each kilometer walked per day has been associated with a 4.8% reduction in likelihood of childhood obesity.

Public transportation serves as a public health intervention to keep children out of cars, and increases the distance they walk each day (increased rates of walking occur because people must walk both to and from public transit stops). Additionally, studies have shown that increased physical activity associated with transit use plays a positive mental health role in children's lives, which can in turn affect obesity rates.

For more information, please email info@indianacat.org or visit us online at www.indianacat.org.

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