



*Good News for
Children and
Families!*

Successes and Progress from the Collaborative
Effort on Children's Environmental Health in New
Brunswick

May 2005 – May 2014

Vision

To provide a clean and healthy environment for children in New Brunswick.

Mission

To work collaboratively to improve children's health and wellbeing by increasing children's exposure to healthy environments and reducing children's exposure to environmental hazards that may contribute to illness, disability, disease or death.

Overview

Children are more vulnerable than adults to chemicals found in the environment, and it is important that they are protected, now and in the future. In recent years, community organizations have been raising concerns about the effects of chemicals in the environment on children's health, and began public awareness and education campaigns to draw attention to the harm that children may experience from chemical pollutants in air, soil, water and food.

In May 2005, in response to these growing concerns, a committee of New Brunswick organizations and agencies began discussions on developing a strategy for action to reduce children's exposure to environmental contaminants that may affect health by causing illness, disability, disease or death. From these discussions, it was decided to establish a broad network of government departments, non-government organizations, private sector agencies, communities and individuals who are interested in working collaboratively to address this issue. After several meetings and discussions, the Children's Environmental Health Collaborative was created.

The format of the collaborative effort is one which brings all stakeholders together in a spirit of mutual cooperation and encourages each agency to contribute in whatever way possible. Like a braid, this effort is made stronger by intertwining everyone's efforts. Agencies participating in the collaborative effort pool resources, expertise, knowledge and experience and, through building upon each other's strengths, develop and implement a coordinated action strategy that will benefit all of New Brunswick.

In the seven years since its inception, the Collaborative has achieved some important milestones, including the development of a collaborative model, a strategy for action, an implementation plan and concrete outcomes based on the plan. The intent of this report is to document this progress, demonstrating the incredible gains made associated to each of the action strategy's goals, as well as providing a vision for the future.

Key Achievements

Goal 1: Support collaborative effort of stakeholders in New Brunswick

- New Brunswick is the first province to establish a diverse province-wide collaborative effort to reduce children's exposure to environmental hazards, linking over 300 people from over 100 agencies representing 21 sectors
- Action strategy developed and continuously updated
- One to two province wide meetings per year, with > 60 stakeholders present
- Communicating among stakeholders achieved through tools including a listserv, a webpage, and interactive web community
- Several active stakeholder teams formed around action strategy goals
- Narrative and assessment of collaborative effort completed
- Evaluation of collaborative effort initiated

Goal 2: Provide educational opportunities for families and professionals

- "Team Nurses", a collaborative stakeholder team actively addressing this goal with the involvement of public health and community health practitioners as well as the Department of Health
- Develop programs and conduct training including 127 New Brunswick children's service providers trained in 2008 and 26 people equipped to train their colleagues in 2009
- Presentations conducted on Children's Environmental Health at multiple professional conferences
- Outreach and training conducted to frontline health and family workers
- Resources amassed and distributed to frontline workers
- An international network of nurses interested in children's environmental health is formed (spring 2014)

Goal 3: Encouraging and promoting research

- Collaborative working group actively addressing this goal, with long range goals of supporting the establishment of a NB Institute on Children's Environmental Health and Research Chairs on Children's Environmental Health in NB
- Children's Environmental Health researchers working in NB connected and collaborating
- Proposal prepared on mapping of hotspots of negative health indicators with environmental contaminants

Goal 4: Improve policy and legislation

- Healthy Environments Unit is established in the NB Department of Health.
- A legislative instrument for Children's Environmental Health drafted
- Meetings held with multiple provincial policy makers.
- Outreach to Ministers of Health and Healthy and Inclusive communities led to upcoming ground breaking work planning on Children's Environmental Health with all stakeholder departments invited

Goal 5: Reduce exposure to contaminants

- Re-formulation/redevelopment of goal 5 is currently underway by collaborative participants.
- Under previous formulation, a wide number of potential contaminants were considered and objectives were set for each one.

Goal 6: Promote and foster children's interaction with nature

- Recently added goal to action strategy
- A group of stakeholders are interested in forming a team and furthering this goal

Evaluation

"Web of Action"

for Children's Environmental Health in New Brunswick

Given the rapid growth of the Collaborative, and the forward momentum, an initial evaluation of the Collaborative was conducted in 2012. The evaluation consists of 2 parts, the *"Web of Action" for Children's Environmental Health in New Brunswick*, which documents the narrative of the Collaborative thus far, and an evaluation framework for future use.

Through this evaluation, respondents noted significant changes within their agencies as a result of their participation in the Collaborative.

- Participants initiated changes in their spheres of influence, which contributed to cleaner, healthier workplace environments and safer environments for children.
- Participants increased their own capacity to address children's environmental health issues, and subsequently, built capacities within their agencies.
- By providing networking and collaborating opportunities, the Collaborative has helped to remove barriers and build bridges between and among government and non-government agencies.
- The Collaborative work has directly and indirectly supported the work of the many agencies within its sphere of influence.

Many successes of the model were identified, and some of which include:

- Strong networks and working relationships initiated and maintained among government and non-government organizations
- An improved understanding of organizational cultures and how to work with them
- Culture of acceptance and openness to new ideas within the Collaborative – "a safe place" to explore solutions to complex issues
- Strengthened capacities within participants, agencies and communities
- Shared responsibility and shared results through collaborative relationships
- Mobilization of the resources of many sectors
- Significant steps toward solving challenging and complex issues in children's environmental health

Findings from the Evaluation show that the New Brunswick Children’s Environmental Health Collaborative has made significant gains for the issue in terms of public and professional awareness, representation from a broad spectrum of sectors, actions to reduce exposures on many fronts, and building a level of “readiness for change” within government and non-government spheres of influence.

At this point in time, with the groundwork laid, the networks and collaborations activated, capacity-building begun and early goals met or in progress, participants have articulated a readiness for continuing to build the network and producing concrete, trans-disciplinary, multi-sectoral and multi-cultural advancements on children’s environmental health.

Impact of participation in collaborative effort

In 2013, using the Evaluation framework developed for the collaborative effort in 2012, an interactive survey was conducted with responsive devices at the fall province wide meeting and a focus group was conducted at an Implementation network meeting with team leads and the Strategic Committee in Sep 2013. The data have yet to be analyzed in full, but preliminary results from the survey suggest that participation in the collaborative resulted in increased awareness of children’s environmental health issues as well as new and improved connections and working relationships.

Strategic Committee Members

Brigitte Lapointe, Health Canada

Karen White-Masry, NB Department of Health

Mary Ann Coleman, New Brunswick Environmental Network

Mary Britten-Belding, VON Healthy Baby and Me





Erin Douthwright, NB Department of Environment and Local Government





Sharon Murphy, Peace NB

Todd Arsenault, NB Department of Health







Children’s Environmental Health Strategy for ACTION

Goal 1: To develop and maintain a collaborative effort of all stakeholders involved in children’s environmental health in New Brunswick

Objectives	Activity Status
<p>1 (a) Establish a collaborative effort of all organizations involved in children’s environmental health</p>	<p> 2006 – 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Environmental Health collaborative effort Planning Committee established • Action strategy ratified at province wide meeting • Strategic Committee established as permanent multi-stakeholder decision-making body • Implementation structures and accountability framework finalized • Multistakeholder teams formed <p> 2010 -2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications plan for the collaborative developed • Online forum created for participants to discuss Children’s Environmental Health issues to facilitate internal communication among and between teams • Narrative description and analysis of the Collaborative completed • Evaluation framework for the Collaborative effort prepared • Collaborative participants surveyed based on evaluation framework <p> 2014- In process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-work goal 5 on contaminants <p> Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage stakeholders via multi-stakeholder conferences on annual or twice yearly basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 9 conferences held from 2006 to 2013 with > 50 stakeholders per conference ○ Conference themes range from “Get Em’ Outside” to “The Power of Collaboration” ○ Stakeholders active in strategy development and implementation • Support collaborative stakeholder teams in furthering the goals of the action strategy • Identify additional partners and conduct outreach efforts to engage them in implementing the strategy • Update action strategy • Maintain stakeholders list & obtain contact information for ongoing communication and liaison among all stakeholders • Secure sufficient fiscal resources to enable the collaborative effort

1 (a) Continued	<p> Planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop participant engagement knowledge product based on analysis of Collaborative • Develop resources and funding knowledge product based on the analysis of Collaborative • Evaluate data from evaluation of the Collaborative effort
1(b) Encourage the involvement of all stakeholders including government departments and parents, children's, health and environmental organizations	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2006 - 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Network established to improve communication among teams through semi-annual meeting (June 2009) <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2010 – 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual self-evaluation process for teams developed and implemented • Met with representatives from every New Brunswick department whose mandate has impacts on this issue <p> Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit additional partners to Children's Environmental Health Collaborative Strategic Committee to ensure broad representation • Inform stakeholders on progress • Hold regular meetings of stakeholder teams • Continue to engage representatives from the eight key provincial government departments • Collaborate with the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment on national initiatives • Conduct outreach to the Department of Education, Health NGO's and Community and Family groups
1(c) Build capacity within the stakeholder groups	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2010 – 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed workplans with collaborative stakeholder groups or "Teams" • Developed vision and mission for Team Nurses <p> Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the stakeholders to build partnerships to leverage in-kind support and funds for the activities of the collaborative effort • Conduct professional development during annual meetings of the collaborative effort • Identify current programs & activities and build linkages <p> Planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a slogan or universal message for all the teams

Goal 2: To develop and advance educational opportunities for families and professionals

Objectives	Activity Status
<p>2(a) Increase the quality, quantity and accessibility of educational tools</p>	<p> 2006- 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory of educational resources on contaminants developed • Informational texts provided to adult literacy organizations <p> 2010 -2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Fact Sheets and newsletter articles on Bisphenol A for nurses, nurse practitioners, education students, teachers and parents <p> Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share educational tools via team listservs, the Children’s Environmental Health listserv and the Children’s Environmental Health webpage
<p>2(b) Inform parents and professionals about environmental health concerns for children</p>	<p> 2006-2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checklist developed for child care facilities <p> 2010 – 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations delivered on reducing exposure to BPA to University of New Brunswick education students, wellness representatives for 3 school districts (along with other information), Home and School members, and nursing students. • Conducted media interviews on BPA and what the public can do to reduce exposure • Communicate with health professionals about the New Brunswick nursing stakeholder team model and achievements on educating families and child service providers on reducing children’s exposure to contaminants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentation to the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) ○ Article published in the newsletter of the Canadian Nurses for Health and the Environment ○ Presentation at Community Health Nurses of Canada conference <p> 2014 - In process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in dialogue on the nurse's role in environmental health • Meeting held with the Nurses Association of New Brunswick (fall 2013) • Meeting planned with NB Nurses Union • Form a international nurses network on Children’s Environmental Health to share tools and best practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposal submitted to Health Care Without Harm, not successful but endorsed ○ Inaugural teleconference held April 2014

2(b) Continued

 **Ongoing**

- Educate and connect with local health professionals on the importance of children's environmental health issues
 - Article on children's environmental health published in the NB Nurses' Association Journal in winter 2013
 - Met with "Doctors for You" 2013
- Develop programs and conduct training
 - 127 New Brunswick children's service providers trained in 2008 and 26 people equipped to train their colleagues in 2009
 - Workshop given for early child care providers on naturalizing childcare outdoor areas during Early Childhood Care & Education New Brunswick event 2010
- Encourage development of local New Brunswick professionals' knowledge base through publicizing existing learning opportunities like conferences, webinars and workshops etc.
- Promote Children's Environmental Health and NB Collaborative effort via collaborative participants engaged in professional societies, including
 - Members of Canadian Nurses for Health and Environment (CNHE) (including terms as board members)
 - Canadian Community of Practice in Ecosystem Approaches to Health Canada advisory committee 2013 - ongoing
- Promote inclusion of Children's Environmental Health in nursing school curriculum
 - Presentation to Atlantic Region Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing annual meeting on including environmental health 2011



 **Planned**

- Approach education and early intervention workers to provide information and education to at risk families on environmental health concerns for children
- Provide information to parents of young children at either the hospital or kindergarten registration
- Engage children and families in launch of Children's Environmental Health bill June 2014
- Lead a special session at professional planning conference People Matters (summer 2014)
- Be part of panel on children's environmental health at Eco-Health international conference (August 2014)



2(c) Inform and engage the public and increase public support to reduce exposure to contaminants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2010-2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided information about Bisphenol A to other teams • Provided information to other teams and the public to enable their involvement in Health Canada’s Chemical Challenge
2(d) Encourage industries to become leaders in protecting children’s environmental health	

Goal 3: To encourage and promote research

Objectives	Activity Status
3(a) Support the preparation of comprehensive reports on NB children’s environmental health.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2006-2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built a cooperative network of New Brunswick researchers addressing issues related to children’s environmental health <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish environmental health portrait of NB children • Encourage the establishment of children’s environmental health indicators • Encourage surveillance mechanisms to collect data on the incidence of children’s disease related to exposure to contaminants
3(b) Identify research gaps and support research to better understand the impact of contaminants and interactions of contaminants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2010 – 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of intent submitted to Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada for a collaborative project on the health of mothers and infants in Chaleur Bay • Meeting of 30 stakeholders held to develop a large collaborative research proposal with linkages between community-based organizations and universities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage national research into health effects of environmental contaminants <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop two research proposals chosen at the June 2012 meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Letter of intent submitted in 2013 to the Commission for Environmental Cooperation on mapping of health indicators to identify hotspots and being resubmitted to foundation funder in 2014 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an inventory of research and data on children’s environmental health and contaminants in NB

3(c) Support research that identifies and fills gaps in best practices in children’s environmental health	 Planned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate Children’s Environmental Health Collaborative participants and the public about the Community of Practice for Ecosystem Approaches to Health
3(d) Work towards sufficient resources for research. Lead – Team Research	 Planned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Children’s Environmental Health Institute in NB Initiate call for Children’s Environmental Health research chairs in NB

Goal 4: To improve policy and legislation related to children’s environmental health

Objectives	Activity Status
4(a) To spearhead and work collaboratively with national policy and legislative initiatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2006 – 2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged New Brunswick agencies to provide input to the Report of the National Policy Consultation on Children's Health and Environment published by Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE)
4(b) Encourage the establishment of government agencies and the development of legislation to uphold the rights of children to a healthy environment <i>Lead – Team Policy</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2010-2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported the establishment of a N.B. environmental health bureau; now the Healthy Environments Branch, NB Dept of Health  Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the establishment of a N.B. secretariat for children’s environmental health  Planned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the establishment of an Auditor General for the Environment

4(c) Advance specific provincial legislative or policy initiatives to reduce children's exposure to contaminants

2006 – 2009

- Legislation encouraged banning the cosmetic use of pesticides

2010- 2013

- Environmental Bill of Rights legislation in other jurisdictions investigated
- Incorporation of the subjects of both “health” and “children” into the draft NB Environmental Bill of Rights as proposed by the NB Environmental Law Society ensured
- N.B. Children’s Environmental Health Bill of Rights draft developed
- National profile on Bill of Rights project attained via panel at Canadian Public Health Association Annual Conference
- First public draft of the Bill of Rights finalized
- Feedback from collaborative participants on the substantive Bill of Rights gathered and incorporated
- Guidelines on green conference initiatives developed and implemented by the Community Health Nurses of Canada (CHNC) (Spring 2010)

2014

- Publicly launched Bill of Rights and engaged stakeholders in project at event with Raffi and Dr. Eilish Cleary

 **2014 - In progress**




- Recruit new partners and supporters for the Bill of Rights work
- Collect organizations names for sign-on to statement of need on children’s environmental health
- Develop public engagement strategy for NB Children’s Environmental Health Bill of Rights

 **Ongoing**

- Work with the Healthy Environments Unit with the Dept of Health to assist in strategically advancing children’s environmental health issues

 **Planned**


- Promote prevention over exposure as a health care approach
- Work with the Department of Health to incorporate children’s environmental health information into guidelines for public health inspection of day care facilities
- Introduce a Pesticide Policy into the schools and daycares.

<p>4(d) Support the incorporation of children’s environmental health concerns into provincial government initiatives through multiple departments</p>	<p> 2010 -2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with political parties to educate them about children’s environmental health issues and the Bill of Rights including the Liberal Association of NB Executive Director, the NDP ad the Green Party (Spring and summer 2013) <p> Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with policy makers from each Department, including Ministers, Deputy Ministers and senior staff <p> 2014 - In process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in establishing formal links between the Department of Environment, Department of Health, and the Department of Education, relating to children’s environmental health issues (meeting with Ministers of Health and Healthy and Inclusive Communities on Children’s Environmental Health March 2013)
<p>4(e) Encourage municipal governments to consider children’s environmental health when policy is developed or updated</p>	

Goal 5: To reduce exposure to specific contaminants through strategic directions

Objectives	Activity Status
<p>5 (a)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-formulation/redevelopment of goal 5 is currently underway by collaborative participants • Under previous formulation, a wide number of potential contaminants were considered and objectives were set for each one

Goal 6: To promote and foster children’s interaction with nature

Objectives	Activity Status
6(a) Change policies to encourage outdoor learning.	 2014 - In progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently added goal to action strategy • A group of stakeholders are interested in forming a team and furthering this goal
6 (b) Include outdoor learning as a component of the curriculum for post secondary students of education.	
6 (c) Shift the culture of education so that “outdoors” is now the thing to do	
6 (d) Educate families and caregivers so they understand the importance of outdoor play.	
6 (e) Build a community by working together across sectors and within neighbourhoods.	
6 (f) Change the landscape through built environments, community gardens and green spaces.	