



# Community Concerns

## Healthy Neighborhoods Make Healthier Kids

(NAPSA)—Experts say many communities across the nation are becoming less healthy, a dangerous trend that can harm children's health.

Often, these problems exist because the way communities are designed can have serious health consequences, especially for children and families.

For example, in urban areas, lack of sidewalks, safe spaces to play, and access to fresh foods contribute to increases in childhood obesity. In communities all across the country, children are exposed to preventable toxins at home, at school and outdoors that can cause serious diseases.

Many children, especially those living in low-income communities, do not have a nearby doctor or pharmacy to provide them with the health care they need.

Fortunately, there are things communities across the nation are doing to improve children's health. For instance, in MacArthur Park, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, the community came together to create a free health clinic and new affordable housing. An abandoned minimall was transformed into a new charter school that offers health and recreation programs for families in the community.

Delaware County, Ohio—the fastest growing county in the state—offers another example of what people working together can accomplish. Unchecked growth had begun to impact residents' health when the community



**A safe playground is an example of one neighborhood amenity that can help communities raise healthier children.**

launched a rigorous assessment to identify areas for improvement. As a result, more parks are being built and community programs were created to encourage families and children to be more active.

**Is your neighborhood healthy for children? Five questions to ask:**

1. Is my family's house free of harmful levels of mold, lead and other kinds of toxic substances?
2. Is there a safe playground nearby where my children can play?
3. Is there a grocery store in my community that offers fresh meat, fruits and vegetables?
4. Is there a health clinic or pharmacy in my neighborhood?
5. Is the air in my neighborhood clean and safe for my kids to breathe?

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