

Child Care, Schools, Camps: Outdoor Air Quality Health Recommendations Based on Air Quality Index

Poor air quality can harm children’s health. Follow these recommendations for child care and educational facilities when air quality changes:

- o Monitor New York City alerts and news reports, and check airnow.gov for the current Air Quality Index (AQI).
- o The chance of being affected by poor air quality increases with more strenuous (intense) outdoor physical activity and longer time outside without breaks.
- o Listen to students and staff — if someone is feeling the effects from poor air quality, they should take a break indoors.
- o Children (especially young children) are more vulnerable to poor air quality than healthy adults. Children sensitive to poor air quality include those with heart or respiratory conditions (including asthma) or who are immunocompromised. These children should follow health care provider recommendations.
- o High-quality masks (N95 or KN95) can reduce exposure to air pollution when worn correctly by people age 2 and older. People with health conditions should follow their provider’s recommendations on wearing a mask when the AQI is high.

AQI	Level	General Public
0 to 50	Good	A great day to be active outside.
51 to 100	Moderate	A good day to be active outside. Be prepared that some sensitive children may experience increased symptoms. Follow asthma action plans and other medical guidance, and take routine precautions.
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Individuals	Short (less than one hour) and low-impact outdoor activities, such as recess and physical education classes, are OK. Sensitive children should avoid strenuous and prolonged (more than one hour) outdoor activities. Allow for more breaks and consider doing less intense exercise for longer outdoor activities, such as sports practice and games. Monitor sensitive children for symptoms. Children with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep their quick-relief medicine handy.
151 to 200	Unhealthy	For all outdoor activities, allow for more breaks and keep activities nonstrenuous and short (less than one hour). Monitor for any signs of air quality-related symptoms, including watery eyes, scratchy throat or difficulty breathing. Reschedule or move indoors all strenuous and prolonged (more than one hour) activities, such as sports practice and games. Sensitive children should avoid unnecessary outdoor activities.
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy	Reschedule or move all outdoor activities indoors. No strenuous or prolonged (more than one hour) activities (for example, sports games) should happen outside.
Greater than 300	Hazardous	All outdoor activities should be rescheduled or moved indoors. If the AQI is predicted to be hazardous for more than one day, school officials should consider providing remote education in place of in-person school, weighing the consequences of remote learning against the risks of unhealthy AQI levels.