

# New York State Children's Environmental Health Centers

Annual Report: 2024-2025



Trixie (age 6 1/2) and Esti (age almost 2)  
Central Park, New York City



## The Need

Children in New York State face a variety of environmental health (EH) risks that can affect their growth, learning, and overall well-being. The most common and pressing risks include contaminated air, water, and soil, substandard housing resulting in lead, mold and pest/pesticide exposure, emerging threats from hazardous chemicals in everyday consumer goods, and climate change-related extreme weather events like wildfires, storms and flooding. These risks can have lasting impacts, especially for young children whose bodies and brains are still developing.

## The Gap

Clinicians are not trained to respond to these EH concerns. They are asking for added resources and education to better serve their patients. Families concerned about environmental exposures impacting their child's health are often confused, anxious and uncertain on how to proceed, and need guidance. Will this exposure make my child sick? What can I do to address this problem? Similarly, communities can face unexpected EH risks like PFAS in water or pollution from industry or accidental spills.

WATER  
CONTAMINATION

PFAS

AIR POLLUTANTS

WILDFIRE  
SMOKE

### Providers

*I can prescribe medication to control my patients' asthma and allergies but that only goes so far. NYSCHECK Prescriptions for Prevention help me counsel patients and their families on environmental asthma triggers and connect them to local services that reduce mold, smoke and pests that exacerbate their child's asthma.*



**Families**

*We just found out that our water is contaminated with PFAS. The levels are just below the EPA action level. I have two children, a 2 year old and a newborn. Is my water safe to drink? Can I use it to make formula? Can I bathe my kids? I asked my pediatricians what to do and they were not familiar with this contaminant. What should I do? I want to keep my kids safe. Having go-to experts from NYSCHECK who can answer my questions has been so helpful.*

ASTHMA  
TRIGGERS

MOLD

SOIL  
CONTAMINATION

LEAD



# NYSCHECK Fills the Gap

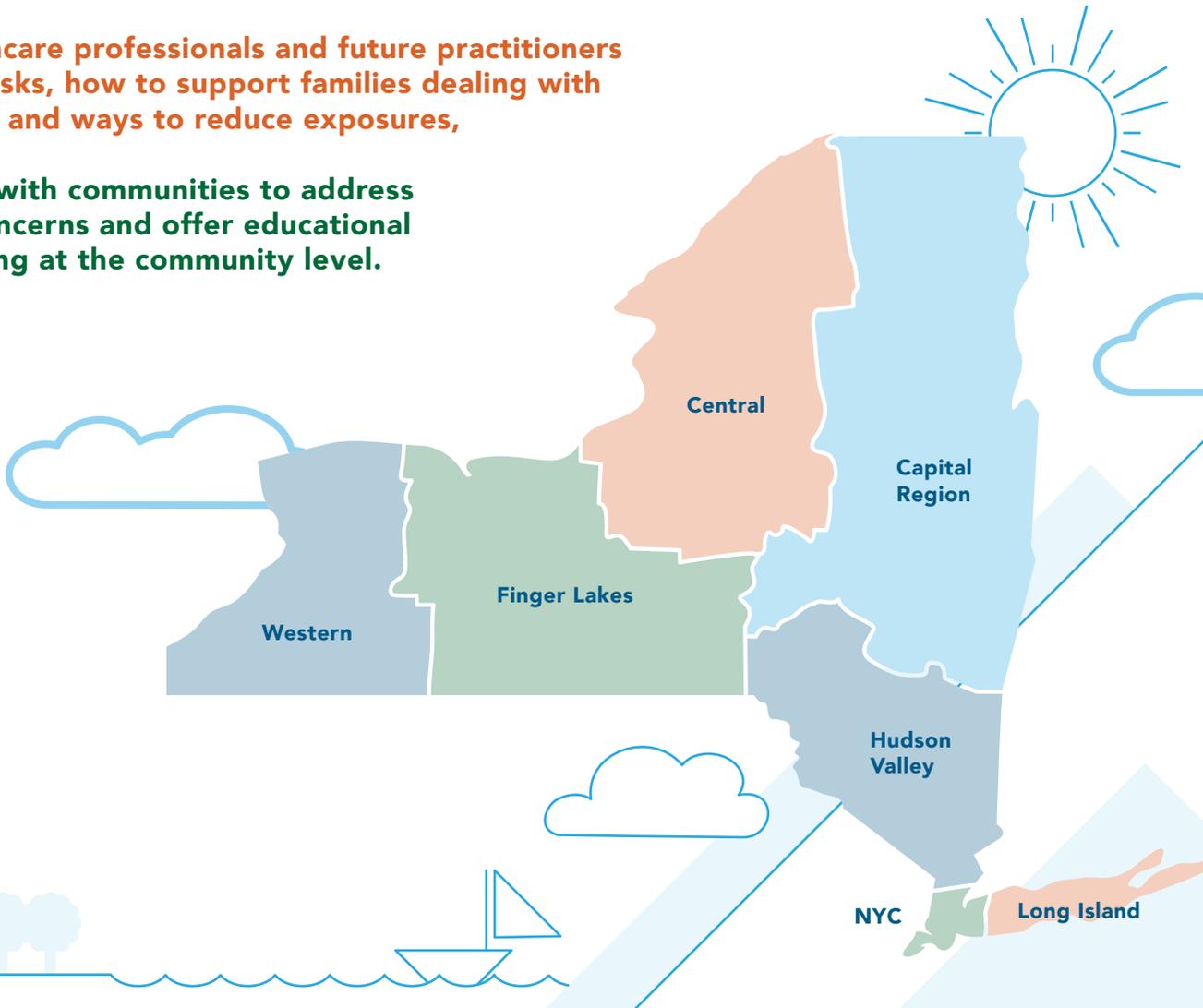
Since 2017, the NYS Environmental Protection Fund has supported the New York State Children's Environmental Health Centers (NYSCHECK) network, transforming the landscape for EH services for families by expanding access to critical services previously unavailable across the state and training clinicians to support families' EH needs. NYSCHECK supports seven Centers located at medical centers across NYS—in Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, Westchester, New York City, and Long Island.

These seven Centers create a robust network offering support to healthcare professionals, families, and communities across the state. These Centers:

**Provide clinical and consultative services and support for families to prevent, diagnose, and treat EH conditions from pregnancy through adolescence and connect families to services to reduce exposures,**

**Train healthcare professionals and future practitioners about EH risks, how to support families dealing with these risks, and ways to reduce exposures,**

**And, work with communities to address local EH concerns and offer educational programming at the community level.**



463,



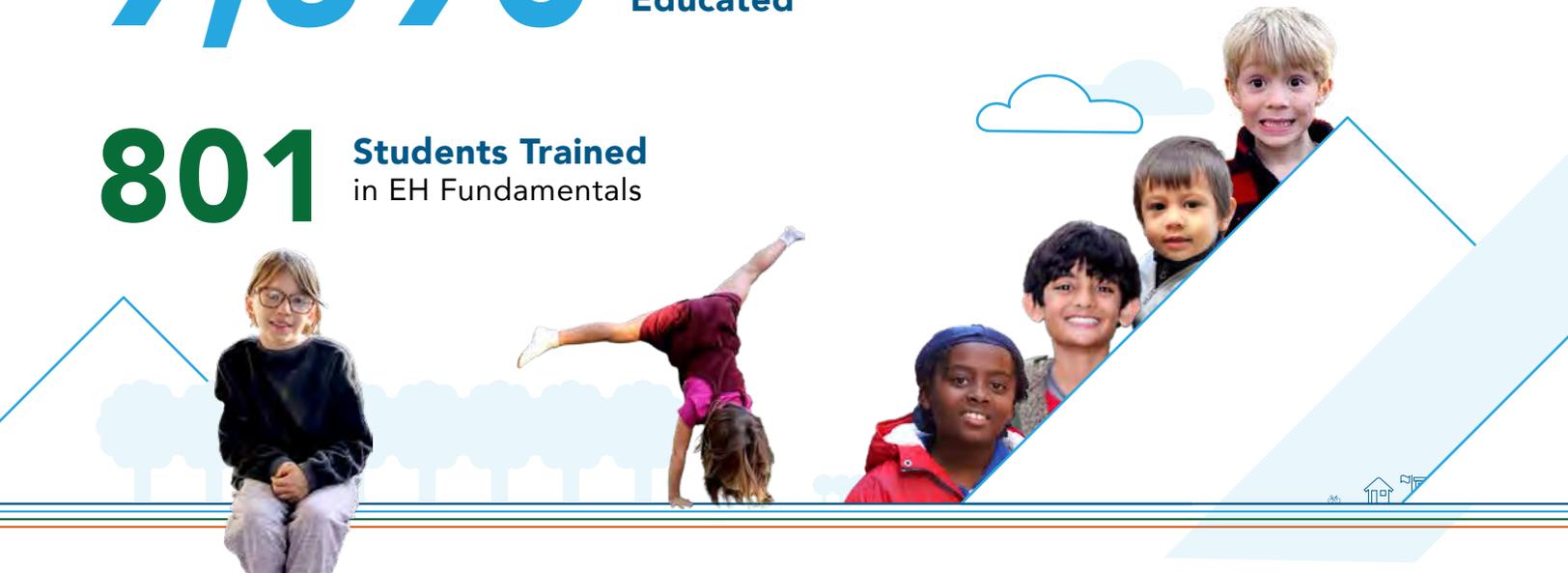
NYSCHECK continues to have a large impact on thousands of New York State families, providing services to over 463,500 families since the network's inception in 2017.



**Families Served This Year** (EH Screening, Education and Consultations) up from 92,343

9,590 **Health Care Professionals Educated**

801 **Students Trained in EH Fundamentals**



# 500



## Lead and Sickle Cell

### Finger Lakes CEHC

worked on a challenging lead poisoning case involving a child with sickle cell disease. Children with sickle cell disease have an unusually high prevalence of pica behavior (eating non-food items) increasing their risk of lead poisoning. The 10-year-old child was admitted to the hospital twice in the past year for chelation for highly elevated blood lead levels, a significant health concern. The case was referred to the Onondaga Health Department who conducted a home inspection, identifying lead paint hazards which were remediated. The Finger Lakes CEHC worked with the family to develop a follow-up plan to limit future lead exposures, partnered with behavioral experts to address the child's tendency to ingest paint chips, and established a plan to monitor blood lead levels to ensure the child's blood levels continued to decline.

Wow!



## Water Contamination: Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

The **Capital Region CEHC** provided clinical and educational support to a family in rural Rensselaer County that was extremely worried about high levels of PFAS in their drinking water. The parents were concerned about how the contaminated drinking water might affect their children's health and what they should do to reduce the risks – use bottled water, install filters, or take other steps. Dr. Stephen De Waal Malefyt met with the family to assess how the exposures might impact the children's health, discussed ways to reduce exposure, provided educational materials, and connected the parents with organizations who could provide additional support.

## Asthma

**Hudson Valley CEHC** provided support to a child with poorly controlled asthma. When CEHC clinicians first met the child in 2023, the family reported 10 unscheduled doctor visits and three emergency room (ER) visits. As part of the Center's Healthy Homes program they partnered with NYSERDA, which funded substantial home repairs to address asthma triggers such as moisture, pests, and allergens. The repairs included: bath fans, repairing gutters and downspouts, integrated pest management, energy efficiency and insulation, and dehumidification. The family also received a cleaning kit, vacuum, and hygrometer to measure moisture levels. The family was relocated to a hotel during the renovation work. By May 2025, the child had substantially fewer unscheduled doctor visits (3) and only one ER visit. In December 2025, the child had no unscheduled doctor or ER visits and his asthma is now well controlled.



## Building the Capacity of the Next Generation

Our annual NYSCHECK Summer Academy is a free 8-week part-time virtual training program for high school, college, graduate and medical students. In its fifth year of programming, the 2025 Academy included 54 students; a total of 199 students have been trained since inception. Students learn about the impact of climate change and other environmental exposures and their impact on health. Presentations are delivered by experts from across the NYSCHECK network. Students also collaborate in teams working on EH projects especially focusing on EH concerns impacting NYS families. The innovative curriculum fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and the role students can play to inform policy change. Group presentations were regionally focused:

**Coastal Flooding** (NYC/Long Island)

**Insect-borne Disease** (Hudson Valley)

**Wildfire Smoke** (Central New York)

**Inland Flooding and  
Sewage Overflow** (Western New York)

[Hear Student Testimonials](#)

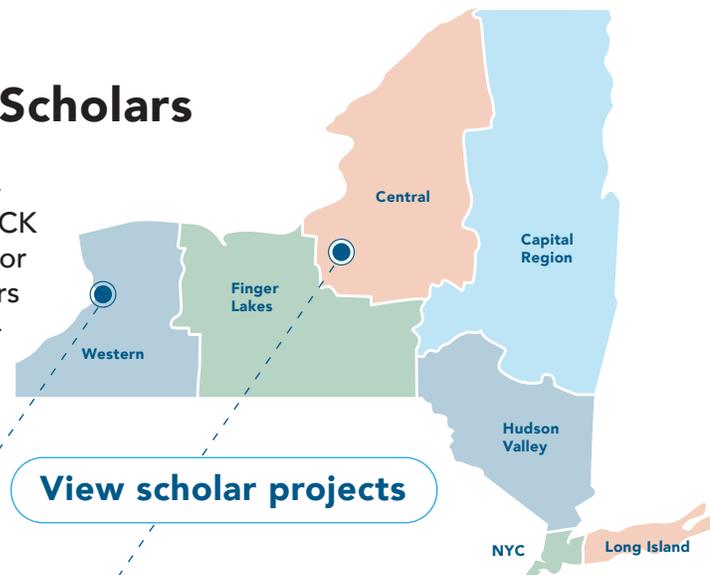
[View Student Presentations](#)

# NYSCHECK Summer Academy



## NYSCHECK Environmental Health Scholars

The EH Scholars program is a pipeline for future NYS environmental health leaders. Scholars work at one of the 7 NYSCHECK centers. Each scholar designs and implements an EH project for their center which aligns with the NYSCHECK mission. Scholars are mentored by experts in the field of pediatric EH, epidemiology, toxicology, and public health. They learn about the fundamentals of environmental risk assessment and risk communication and engage in a wide range of learning opportunities. Scholars come from diverse fields including medicine, social work, public health and EH.



*Dr. Christina Padgett's Advancing Pediatric Resident Medical Education to Meet the Climate Crisis Project, developed, implemented, and evaluated a climate change and health (CCH) curriculum. The curriculum was tailored to pediatric residents and designed to improve knowledge and comfort to integrate CCH content into discussions with patients. Because of the project's success, the Center received approval to implement a similar curriculum into the University at Buffalo four-year medical school curriculum!*



*EH Scholar Olivia Malvasi's I-81 Pollution Monitoring and Community Engagement Project centered on the construction revitalization project in Syracuse to remove and replace the I-81 viaduct. Fifty years ago, the construction of the original I-81 viaduct displaced over 1,300 families, deepening social divides and increasing exposure to harmful air pollution in this historically Black neighborhood. The current revitalization project will replace the viaduct with a street-level grid that will include community infrastructure like parks and walkways. Ms. Malvasi's project included (1) a community health needs assessment designed to capture community health concerns and priorities; (2) environmental monitoring; and (3) community health education and partnerships with community stakeholders. The project is on-going and has already yielded strong partnerships that will be valuable to the project and to their Center*

## Rural Working Group

In 2025, the NYSCHECK Rural Working Group was created to take a proactive approach to better understand gaps in EH services in rural areas and build capacity to address these needs through partnership and training. The Working Group includes representatives from all seven Centers. This year the Finger Lakes CEHC convened its second Rural Summit building bridges with social service, housing, and health organizations serving rural communities. Through direct outreach to local health departments and engagement with Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYSCHECK strengthened community relationships in priority rural counties: St Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis, Chautauque, Cattaraugus, Allegany, Steuben, Chemung, Tompkins, Tioga, Washington, Chenango, and Broome. To build EH clinical capacity, the Central NY CEHC leveraged its expertise to incorporate an EH session into the SUNY Upstate medical student rural medicine track curriculum.

# Children's Environmental Health Day

Each year NYCSCHECK celebrates Children's Environmental Health (CEH) Day, recognizing the important work of individuals striving to reduce the impact of EH issues on children. The 2025 CEH Day celebrations included three exciting events.

On October 8, the network hosted a virtual Youth Symposium on Climate and Environmental Justice with 46 attendees. Student presenters from across New York shared projects examining how exposures such as PM<sub>2.5</sub>, PFAS, pesticides, radon, mold, and extreme heat affect their communities.

On October 9, the network officially celebrated CEH Day, with 200 attendees. The event featured a thought provoking presentation, "A Covenant with Our Children: Safe Drinking Water" by Dr. Alan Woolf, a pediatrician from Harvard Medical School and expert on water quality and health, along with a CEH awards ceremony, honoring seven individuals for their impactful work.

Our annual Envision the Environment CEH day art celebration captured creative visions from children of all ages around two themes.

**Healthy Communities:** What do homes, neighborhoods and places that are healthy for people look like?

**Fast Fashion:** What can you tell us about the problems and solutions for the rapid production and disposal of clothing that contributes to climate change and pollution?



CEH Day awardee Dr. Alan Woolf delivers keynote. Other awardees are Michele Herdt (NYSDOH), Lynley Siag (NYSDOH); Ameesha Mehta-Sampath (EPA); and Yelissa Alvarez, Jennifer Arcila and Daouda Diarrassouba accepting on behalf of AIRnyc.

[View CEH Day Content](#)

(Facing page)  
Selections from  
the 2025 Envision  
the Environment art  
celebration addressing  
healthy communities  
and fast fashion

Attendees at the CEH Day celebration hosted by the New York City CEHC



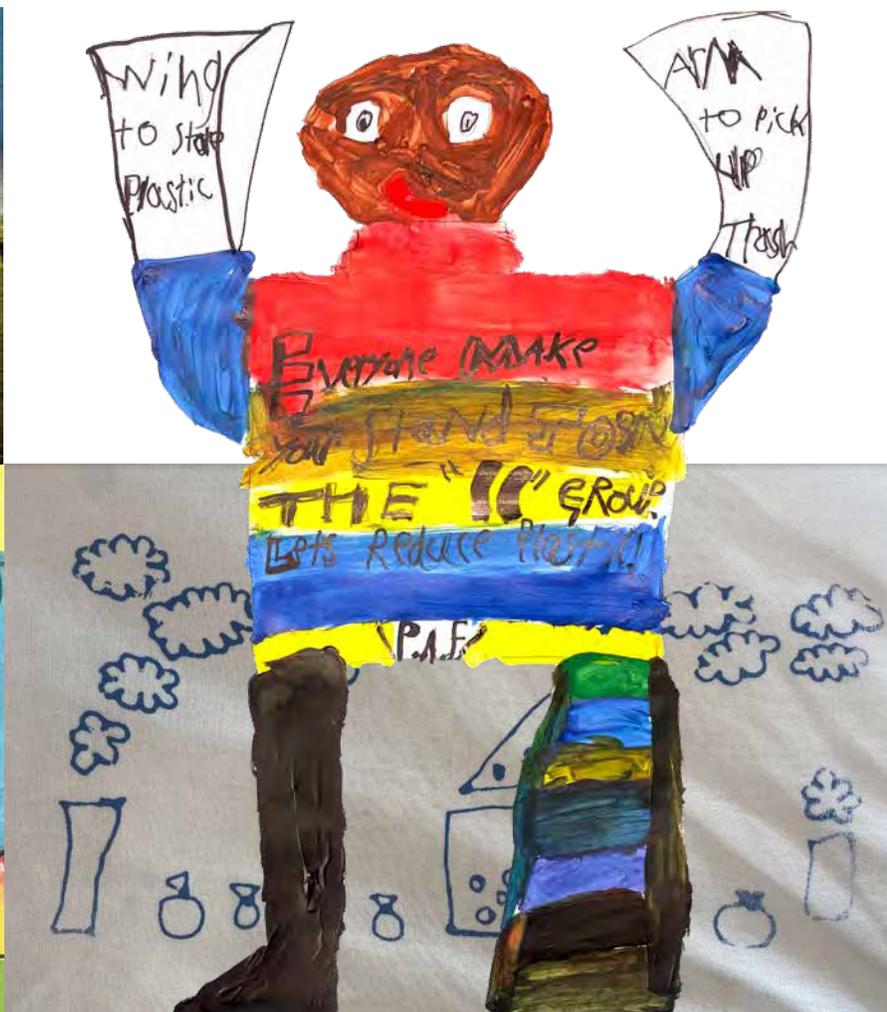
# Community Partnerships

**NYC CEHC** has nurtured and sustained partnerships with community-based organizations that provide housing related services, as part of their environmental asthma consultation program.

Children with severe asthma receive a comprehensive clinical environmental assessment to identify asthma triggers. When housing issues are identified, referrals are made to **Little Sisters of Assumption Family Health Service** and **AIRnyc** which offer mold remediation and pest control, and the **NYC Healthy Homes Program** that can inspect the property and order owners to remediate mold and pest problems as needed.

**Long Island CEHC** has a robust collaboration with their medical-legal partnership (MLP). Families experiencing housing insecurity or housing quality issues like mold and pests are referred by the Center to MLP, which can provide legal services to improve housing conditions. The Center also provides education and support to these families to help them take steps to minimize their housing-based health hazards.

Children are  
champions for change!



# Our Expanding Network

NYSCHECK Centers actively engage advisors, community organizations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies.

## NYSCHECK Advisory Committee

Bobbi Wilding, MS (Clean+Healthy)  
Elizabeth McDade (Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning)  
Andy Aligne, MD, MPH (Finger Lakes Children's Environmental Health Center)  
Wendy Mindel, MPH (Institute for Exposomic Research Board, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai)  
Pamela Hadad-Hurst (NY State Department of Environmental Conservation)  
Lynley Siag, MPH, MPA (NY State Department of Health)  
Jordana Vanderselt, MPH (WE ACT)  
Melinda Cameron, MD (Western NY Children's Environmental Health Center)

## Community Organizations

ACCORD Corporation  
ADK Health Institute (AHI)  
AIRnyc  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Lung Association (ALA)  
Buffalo Go Green  
Buffalo Prenatal Perinatal Network  
Cafeteria Culture  
Cameron Community Ministries  
Center for Elder Law and Justice (MedLaw Partnership)  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
Clean+Healthy  
Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region  
Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning  
Docs for Tots  
Families for Lead Freedom Now  
Focusing Our Resources for Community Enlightenment (FORCE)  
Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson  
Grassroots Gardens WNY  
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative  
Healthy@HomeCHQ  
Help Me Grow—Long Island  
HomeOwnershipCenter  
Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition  
Jamestown Community Learning Council Home Visiting Program  
Kids Thrive 585  
Lead Safe Task Force  
LeadSafeCNY Coalition  
Legal Services of Central New York  
Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service  
Madison County Rural Health Council, Inc. (MCRHC)  
New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) Central New York Office  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest  
Nullary Care  
Onondaga Earth Corps  
Onondaga Environmental Institute  
Planned Parenthood of Greater New York  
Planned Parenthood of the Hudson Valley  
Prevention is the Cure  
Project Breathe NY (ALA & NYSDOH)  
PUSH Buffalo  
Reach Out and Read  
The RED Bookshelf  
Rochester Ecology Partners  
Sankofa Reproductive Health and Healing Center: Doula Collective  
Starflower Experiences  
Staten Island Performing Provider System (SI PPS)  
The Tool Library  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice  
Westchester Community Opportunity Program  
White Plains Youth Bureau  
Yonkers Partners in Education

**Academic and Healthcare Partners**

Albany Medical Health System	Montefiore Medical Center
Breastfeeding Resiliency, Engagement, and Empowerment (BFREE) Coalition	MotherToBaby UR Medicine
Buffalo School-Based Health Centers	Mount Sinai Institute for Exposomic Research
Capital District Physicians' Health Plan	National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Community Engagement Core
Children's Hospital at Montefiore	Northwell Health
Columbia Memorial Pediatrics	Oishei Healthy Kids
ConnexCare Oswego (FQHC)	Pediatric Links with the Community (PLC)
Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County	Stony Brook School of Medicine
Dows Lane Elementary School	SUNY ESF
Irvington Free Union School District	SUNY Upstate Medical University
Environmental Health Sciences Center's Community Engagement Core	UB MD Obstetrics and Gynecology
Erie Niagara Area Health Education Center	University at Albany, College of Integrated Health Sciences
Healthy Baby Network	University at Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai	University of Rochester—Breastfeeding & Human Lactation Study Center
Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo	University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC)
Kaleida Health	Upstate New York Poison Center
Long Island University Post	Visiting Nursing Services, Westchester
Maria Fareri Children's Hospital	

**Government and Other Partners**

Cattaraugus County Healthy Neighborhoods Program	Oneida County Health Department, Lead Program
Central/Eastern New York Lead Poisoning Resource Center	Onondaga County Health Department
Dutchess County Department of Health	Orange County Department of Health
Erie County Department of Health	Orleans County Health Department Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
Genesee County Healthy Neighborhoods Program	Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units
Lewis County Progressive Agriculture Safety Day	Putnam County Department of Health
Madison County Health Department, Healthy Neighborhoods Program	Rockland County Department of Health
Nagin Environmental Solutions	St. Lawrence County Health Department
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	Tohn Environmental Strategies
New York State Asthma Control Program	USDA Rural Development Office—Section 504 Home Repair Program
New York State Children's Asthma Initiative	Westchester County Department of Health
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	Western Suffolk BOCES
New York State Department of Health	Western New York Lead Poisoning Prevention Resource Center
New York State Healthy Neighborhoods Program	
Niagara County Healthy Neighborhoods Program	

**New York State Children's Environmental Health Centers (NYS CHECK)** serve the environmental health (EH) needs of children and families across the state. Each of the seven Centers provides the counties in their region with:

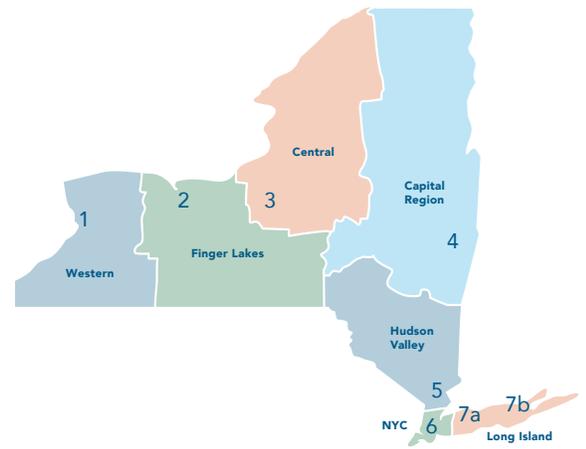
**EH Consultations**

**Screening to Identify EH Risks**

**Connections to Community-Based Resources**

**EH Education for Students and Health Professionals**  
and

**Community Guidance on Responding to EH Concerns**



Have an environmental health question? We can help!

**Ask a Question at [NYS CHECK.org/ask-a-question](https://nyscheck.org/ask-a-question)** to hear from experts or connect to one of our Centers for clinical support.



1 Western NY CEHC



2 Finger Lakes CEHC



3 Central NY CEHC



4 Capital Region CEHC



5 Hudson Valley CEHC



6 New York City CEHC



7a Long Island CEHC (Nassau)



7b Long Island CEHC (Suffolk)

