



Lead Testing Press Release

From: Greater Indianapolis NAACP

INDIANAPOLIS — All Indianapolis Public Schools kindergarten and first grade students will be offered free lead testing at their schools, through a partnership announced today with the Marion County Public Health Department, IPS, the Greater Indianapolis NAACP and WTLC AM-FM

Lead is a toxic metal and can cause serious damage to a child's developing brain. Children are exposed to lead primarily from paint and dust in homes and buildings built before 1978. Lead exposure can also come from drinking water that runs through lead pipes, contaminated soils, and some consumer products. No amount of lead is safe for children.

Dr. Virginia Caine "The Marion County Public Health Department is delighted to offer our services to ensure our children are not lead poisoned. This is a very important mission and we remain diligent in our efforts to help prevent it."

Free testing will be offered at all IPS schools during the week and parents must give their permission. The test involves collecting a small amount of blood through a skin prick.

"Testing a child's blood is the main way to test for lead, and it's vital for children's health and success in school," said IPS School Board member Elizabeth Gore, who sponsored the resolution to require lead testing in IPS schools. "We know that children exposed to lead can have difficulty paying attention, learning to read and following classroom rules. If possible, children should be tested as toddlers — long before they're in an IPS classroom."

"The NAACP is grateful to IPS and the Marion County Public Health Department for working with us to screen children for elevated lead levels," said Chrystal Ratcliffe, president of Greater Indianapolis NAACP Branch 3053. "We encourage all parents to say yes to lead testing because it can help ensure a healthy and successful future for your child."

Interim Superintendent Aleesia Johnson and Marion County Public Health Director Dr. Virginia Caine have recorded a public service announcement that announces the testing and urges parents to allow their children to be tested. The PSA will run on WTLC FM, WTLC AM, WHHH, WNOW 3 times a day between 6am and 1pm beginning Monday April 27th to May 27th.

Children who attend mayor-sponsored charter schools will also be offered free lead testing in kindergarten and first grade, through a resolution adopted earlier this year by the City-County Council and signed by Mayor Joe Hogsett.

Children with elevated lead levels will receive further assistance from the Marion County Public Health Department.

