

# Tree House Tots Blew Away Secondhand Smoke

**Tree House Tots Childcare** opened its doors in Machias in July, 2019. Childcare providers are few and far between in rural Washington County (WC), Maine. Many childcare providers have closed in the past few years.

Brittany Robinson is a mother and experienced childcare provider. She already had a waiting list before she opened. She was eager to establish her license and develop her policy manual for parents. Brittany worked closely with Healthy Acadia to create a 100% tobacco-free policy. Since her policy met model standards, she received signage to put on her building and outside the fenced playground facing the parking lot. She also received handouts to share with parents about the negative impacts of smoking, second and thirdhand smoke and resources to support those who may want to quit. This is especially important in Washington County, where both tobacco use and youth exposure to cigarette smoke are high. More than 37% of WC middle schoolers reported being in the same room with someone who was smoking in the past 7 days, compared to 22% of middle schoolers statewide (MIYHS, 2019).

In addition, Brittany joined Let's Go! 5210, a nationally recognized obesity prevention program. Together with the work she and her staff are doing to encourage parents to create tobacco free environments for their children, they are also modeling healthier food options and supporting parents and guardians to bring healthier food options to this childcare for their children.



**“We have parents that are smokers and no one drives in or out of the parking lot smoking anymore. I believe that secondhand smoke affects the children. It can make them more sick. With this policy, it encourages parents, grandparents, and guardians to be more mindful.”**

*Brittany Robinson, owner/manager,  
Tree House Tots Childcare*

The multi-unit commercial building has additional storefronts and residential apartments on the second floor. We plan to continue to encourage the builder and owner to pass an umbrella model policy for the entire facility in the near future.

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