

April 2021

AROOSTOOK COUNTY ACTION PROGRAM | SUCCESS STORY

# Smoke-Free Centers for County Kiddos

Innovative resources help county prevention partners  
create policy ease for local childcare providers.

## Summary

Daycare, for so many young ones, is a fundamental part of childhood growth. This is the place where first words happen, and first steps are taken. Where so many learn how to socialize, develop routines, explore and play. With the amount of time that children spend with their daycare providers, you can imagine how important it is that their daily experience does not include exposure to secondhand and thirdhand smoke.

## Challenge

According to research collected from the Center for Disease Control, we know there are no safe levels of exposure to secondhand smoke, and what we know of thirdhand smoke is, that the chemicals are left behind on surfaces that we are exposed to long after the odor has gone away (2020). This includes clothing which should be changed and laundered prior to contact with children.

For Maine childcare licensing, the regulations state that, "18.4.4.5 Smoking is prohibited on the premises when children are present. This includes all indoor and outdoor areas used by the facility, where children may be present." The best way to put this regulation into action is through a well developed policy and signage.

One of the common issues that we have come upon, is that childcare providers do not have the time needed to respond to communications, and sit down long enough to develop a comprehensive tobacco policy. Aroostook County District Tobacco Prevention Partners (DTPP) work to meet the providers in ways that reach their needs, and leave them with a partner in tobacco prevention.

*"For the safety and health of our children Daigle Daycare prides it's self on being a non smoking property."*

*-Jenn Collin Daigle Owner*

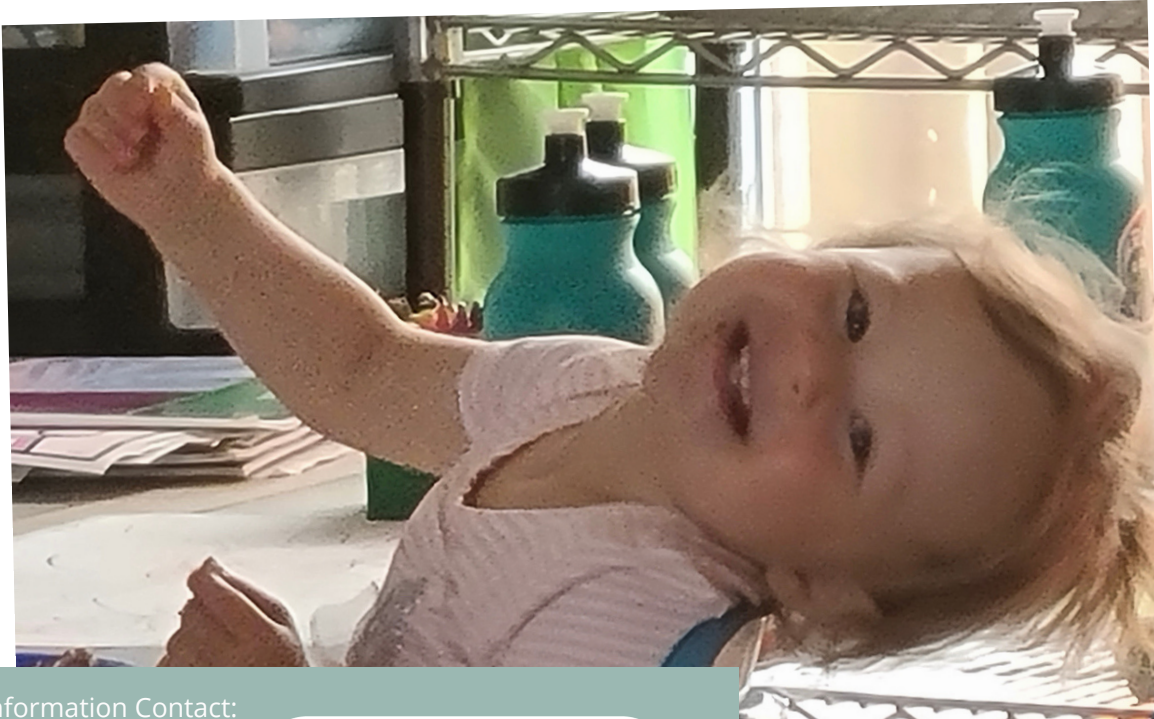


## Approach

In order to best serve county childcare providers, the tobacco prevention partners assess which method of delivery will be the most effective. After some reflection, it became clear that childcare providers would best be reached through classic snail mail, giving them something tangible to hold on to. In the mailing, they receive a short letter from their local DTPP, a policy template, and a sheet with available signage designed to help to express the new policy to the public.

Since 2016, the DTPPs at ACAP have helped 56 different providers with implementing childcare policies, 8 of which have been established this past quarter. Our job is to come in and work with businesses to establish a comprehensive policy that exceeds state standards and truly puts the health of Mainers first.

Aroostook County DTPPs are working to combat the common misconception that establishing a smoke free policy is just too much work. By working with local DTPPs businesses have a partner that will be there every step of the way. Our job is to take the guesswork out of the equation and leave our local businesses with a policy and so many free resources, from Maine's Center for Tobacco Independence, that they can stand behind when it comes to making all of our communities healthier places to live.



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