

**CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (CEH)
Report 2021
WHO and WHO collaborating centre network on CEH**

At the end of 2019, the Children's Environmental Health Programme joined the Chemical Safety Programme. Information on this programme and activities listed below can be found at https://www.who.int/health-topics/children-environmental-health#tab=tab_1 Major activities for children's environmental health in 2021 included:

1 Capacity building

WHO started in 2021 the update and revision of at least 12 modules of the [WHO Training Package on Children's Environmental Health for the Health Sector](#). These include training modules on Why children, Children are not little adults, Pediatric environmental history, Water, Sanitation and hygiene, E-waste, Chemicals, Mercury, Lead, POPs, Second-hand tobacco smoke, Ambient air, Household air, Climate change. The aim of this update is to provide possibilities for CEH training through a two-pronged approach: provide updated WHO materials aimed at primary healthcare workers and clinicians that can be easily used to train others. And in addition, to develop a future joint UNICEF/WHO training platform that can be accessed by primary health workers and clinicians for their self-training in main CEH areas in a holistic way, with the possibility to have a certificate of completion by both agencies.

The current materials are being used in a number of training courses and sent to online requests to WHO.

The CEH capacity-building activities benefit from the important support of all WHO CEH collaborating centres.

2 E-waste and child health

During 2021, WHO advanced the development of the E-waste Coalition, with other international agencies (UNU, UNIDO, UNEP, UNITAR, ILO, the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (BRS), ITC, ITU, and UN-HABITAT) that aims at jointly addressing the e-waste challenge together through raising awareness, increasing knowledge and providing integrated support to countries in addressing their e-waste challenges sustainably.

In addition, WHO has continued the implementation of the [WHO E-waste and child health initiative](#) through the launch of the first WHO report on e-waste and child health summarizing main health concerns for children and actions for the health sector and other relevant publications and communication materials to facilitate global and local evidence generation and promotion of actions to protect health from e-waste exposures:

- WHO report: [Children and digital dumpsites: e-waste exposure and child health](#) (published in all UN languages, Portuguese and Korean)
- WHO report: [Summary for policy-makers](#) (published in all UN languages and Portuguese)
- WHO report: [Web annex – literature review](#)
- [Health consequences of exposure to e-waste: an updated systematic review](#) (Lancet Planetary Health). Developed with the support of the WHO Collaborating Centre in Brisbane, Australia.

Communications and advocacy materials included

- [WHO Initiative on E-waste and Child Health \(leaflet\)](#) (published in all UN languages and Portuguese)
- [WHO report press release](#)
- [Infographics](#) -with key messages from the report (published in all UN languages)
- [Facts in pictures: e-waste and child health](#)
- [QA: children and digital dumpsites: smaller hands, cheaper labour – the crisis of e-waste and children’s health](#)
- [Managing the harmful effects of e-waste in Uruguay](#) (WHO Medium article, developed with the WHO collaborating centre in Hospital de Clinicas, Uruguay)
- [Uruguay e-waste photo library](#) (WHO photo library carried out with the support of the WHO collaborating centre in Hospital de Clinicas, Uruguay)
- [Early childhood matters 2021](#) – *How your discarded cell phone harms children, pregnant women and the planet: millions working in the informal recycling sector are exposed to dangerous chemicals*
- A dedicated [WHO website page](#)

The main WHO report was launched with important media attention in June 2021, followed by a series of virtual global and regional events with other UN agencies (eg International telecommunications Union, United Nations Industrial Development Organization) and other stakeholders (eg Sociedad Iberoamericana de Salud Ambiental, GeoHealth Africa). The report was also promoted through a pilot media campaign with Punto Cero (September to December 2021). PAHO organized a dedicated [webinar](#) in Spanish dedicated to promoting the report’s main findings and implications at regional level and to giving visibility to the first Latin American pilots and inter-agency work being carried in the Americas.

The first inter-agency country pilots on e-waste and child health, based on the WHO global initiative on e-waste and child health are currently being implemented by PAHO in Bolivia and Panama and a virtual campus course on the subject is currently being developed to be launched in 2022 with the important support of WHO CC Mexico.

The first e-waste and child health pilot in the African region started in Nigeria in 2021. In addition to initial steps of country implementation, WHO Nigeria organized a workshop and media briefing on e-waste and child health in December 2021. To facilitate regional data, WHO co-published a regional review article on [E-waste in Africa: a serious threat to the health of children](#) (International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health) with the support of the WHO collaborating centre in University of Albany, US.

The WHO e-waste activities benefit from the important support of all WHO CEH collaborating centres.

3 Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs)

As EDCs are a challenge to health and to child development in particular, WHO contributed to a Health & Environment Alliance (HEAL) webinar on mutual roles in advancing EDC policies and to a special session of the National Academy of Medicine in Uruguay on Endocrine disrupting chemicals and women’s health.

4 Integrating environment into child and maternal health initiatives

WHO worked on integrating environment into child and maternal health current initiatives. An example of this was collaboration the addition of environmental health and chemicals in the first WHO report about WHO's work in adolescent health: [Working together for a brighter future](#) *How WHO improves health and promotes well-being for the world's adolescents*. WHO is also working internally with child development health and mental health colleagues integrating lead and mercury into upcoming WHO reports on adolescent health and mental health (eg the Intersectoral global action plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders now published on the EB website (150/7 Annex 7 https://apps.who.int/gb/e/e_eb150.html#informationdocuments).

5 Networks and communication

WHO continued working with a very active network of about 10 WHO collaborating centres in Children's Environmental Health that provides support to WHO activities, and have been crucial to the development and implementation of those mentioned above. WHO CC NIEHS organized regular calls to facilitate the interaction between CCs. In addition, WHO sends on a regular basis the Children's Environmental Health newsletter, developed by WHO CC Canada to provide latest information, materials and events from WHO and others on children's environmental health. Finally, WHO has been working in close collaboration with UNICEF on CEH and in chemicals as per a corporate collaboration agreement.

WHO CCs in Korea, Japan, Mexico and Uruguay, as well as ISDE and INCHES have been importantly supporting outreach of our different materials through a number of translations into local languages and local adaptations.

In addition, a number of WHO CCs have been contributing reviews for the WHO Guidelines on Prevention of Lead Exposure (to be published).