

## Lead Poisoning is Still an Issue

Although there has been a significant decrease in the number of Boston children diagnosed with elevated blood lead levels, these statistics do not include those children with lower levels of lead. Experts agree that **no** level of lead is safe, therefore even low levels of lead exposure can cause serious harm to a child's health. The use of lead paint in homes was not banned until 1978, so any homes built prior to this date are potential risks.

## Effects of Lead Poisoning

Children are most at risk for lead poisoning when they are under the age of six. At this time, their bodies are still developing and they engage in activities like crawling and hand to mouth movements that put them at an increased risk of exposure to lead dust. Lead dust is the most common source of poisoning in this area. While MA defines lead poisoning at 25 µ/dL, **there can be significant IQ loss at a level of 10 µ/dL and below.** Lead poisoning has been linked to developmental and learning disabilities, and recent studies have shown a correlation between high lead levels in childhood and an increased inclination towards violence and criminal activity later in life.



## The Massachusetts Lead Law

The Massachusetts Lead Law requires that any residence built before 1978, that houses a child under six, must be delead and have a certificate of compliance. Deleading is the responsibility of the landlord or property owner. The MA Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program has an online database that allows you to search the lead inspection history of your house. Tenants have the right to ask their landlords to have a lead inspection and cannot be denied housing because they have a young child. If you believe you have been denied housing for this reason, please call the **Boston Fair Housing Commission** at (617) 635-3559.

## Lead in Water

LAC is currently running a free program to test for lead in the water of Boston homes. If you live in Boston and would like to receive a **free lead in water test kit**, please contact us.

## Lead Action Collaborative

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# Lead Action Collaborative

*Working to end childhood lead poisoning in Boston's high-risk neighborhoods*



A program of



**Health Resources in Action**  
Advancing Public Health and Medical Research

## Who We Are

Since 1993 the Lead Action Collaborative (LAC) has played a leadership role in the fight to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in Boston. Made up of non-profit organizations, foundations, and government agencies, LAC has been working to develop and implement strategies that will greatly reduce the risk and eventually eliminate the likelihood that children in Boston will test positive for lead poisoning.



## Our Mission

Our multifaceted approach to combating lead poisoning includes:

- Increasing visibility of lead poisoning and related issues like affordable housing, access to health care, and social and environmental justice
- Ensuring the effectiveness of related policies and regulations through advocacy and coalition building
- Working with community groups to develop and sustain their own outreach programs at the grassroots level



## Who We Serve

Lead exposure disproportionately impacts Boston's low income, minority populations. In 2008, nearly 75% of new cases came from Dorchester, East Boston, Roxbury, Roslindale and Hyde Park. About 43% of new cases came from Dorchester alone. Our strategy is to bring the resources to those individuals who need them most by focusing on these neighborhoods first.

The population that we directly serve is comprised of dozens of residents and advocates in Boston's communities of color, and immigrants and refugees in the city's poorest neighborhoods. They are, among others, health outreach workers, immigrant advocates in the Latino, Asian, and Haitian communities, tenant organizers, and homeowner counselors. The population we indirectly serve consists of thousands of Boston residents who are served by our member organizations, who attend our community-wide events, and who learn from our media outreach.

## Our Strategy: The Blueprint

Our *Blueprint to End Childhood Lead Poisoning in Boston* lays out a strategy to virtually eliminate childhood lead poisoning in Boston by 2010. The *Blueprint* was designed by community leaders and government officials who made the decision to work together to find a solution to end childhood lead poisoning in Boston.

The main Components of the Blueprint are:

- ◆ **Launching Community Needs Assessment**
- ◆ **Meeting the Needs of Poisoned Children**
- ◆ **Making Boston's Housing Lead Safe**
- ◆ **Advocating for Legislative and Policy Change (*a separate policy committee of LAC*)**

Our current strategy is one of prevention—combating lead poisoning before a child is even at risk. We are using our Community Assessment Tool to evaluate exterior building conditions that identify the houses that are most likely to poison. We then assist property owners in accessing all available resources to make their house safe. This strategy is implemented in the city's highest risk neighborhoods, and supported by education, outreach, and advocacy on behalf of those most-at risk for lead poisoning.