

Final letter for issuance 9/8/2017

Wildfire Smoke Advisory

Dear Southern Oregon Head Start families,

Due to the many wildfires burning in our area affecting air quality in Jackson and Josephine counties, we are closely monitoring the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Air Quality Index to ensure that we know when potential unhealthy or hazardous conditions exist so we can take the right precautions to protect our students and staff.

All children, even those without any pre-existing illness are considered a sensitive population because their lungs are still developing, making them more susceptible to air pollution than healthy adults. Wildfire smoke can persist for days or even months, depending on the extent of the wildfire. Symptoms from smoke inhalation can include coughing, wheezing, difficulty breathing, and chest tightness. Even children who do not have asthma could experience these symptoms. Air pollution from wildfire can make asthma symptoms worse and trigger attacks.

We also monitor temperature forecasts because high temperatures with wildfire smoke pose a substantial risk of unhealthy environments in many of our school buildings. Some of our buildings do not have climate control equipment and we can't open windows because of the smoke.

We monitor day to day and know if conditions are unhealthy, and modify our daily activities to be compatible with staying inside based on the current air quality readings. Children will not go outside when the risk is high. If conditions require any unusual courses of action, we will notify you immediately.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sarah Forga, Health/Nutrition Director at 541 734-5150 ext. 1057; Chuck Ljungberg, Safety Compliance Officer at 541 734-5150 ext. 1008; or Main Office Administration at 541-734-5150.