

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.**  
**HEAD START**  
**TOBACCO PREVENTION POLICY**

**Policy:**

For the physical and economic health of children, families and staff, RMDC Head Start will provide tobacco prevention education and cessation support to staff, children and their families.

- Tobacco related illness is the number one preventable cause of death in the United States.
- Smoking a pack of cigarettes, a day will cost over \$2,000 yearly and medical bills for smokers tend to be \$12,000-\$14,000 more than non-smokers over the course of their lifetime.
- The Surgeon General warns there is no safe exposure to second hand smoke.
- Third hand smoke is the residual smoke that remains on clothing and fabric. Third hand smoke poses the same health risks as first or second hand smoke.
- Tobacco may be allowed if it is used as part of an American Indian cultural activity. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act protects the rights of American Indians providing freedom to worship through traditional ceremonies using sacred objects like tobacco.

**Procedures:**

1. Families that use tobacco will be identified during Head Start intake process when noted on the Family Assessment.
2. At the Family Advocate Home Visit, during family assessment review, families who use tobacco will be advised about the risks of tobacco and asked if they are interested in quitting. If they respond with a yes, they will be referred to the appropriate resource. If a family is not ready to quit the Family Advocate will talk with the family about the importance of not smoking around their children and ways to reduce their child's exposure to second and third hand smoke in all environments which the child is in.
3. A referral can be done at any time throughout the year with families. It is not limited to the initial intake or Family Partnership development.
4. The Family Advocates will follow up with and support the families' progress.
5. The Family Advocate will track how many families use tobacco and how many families have been referred to a cessation program throughout the program year.
6. The tobacco cessation resource guide will be updated yearly to ensure that all the resources are still available and to include new resources. This guide will be included in our Community Resource Directory. (Quit Line, St. Pete's classes, Nic-Anon, VA, Insight, School District)
7. Staff will be educated in Tobacco 101 and the brief intervention techniques that utilize the "Helping Smokers Quit: A Guide for Nurses". We will provide classes for families who have been identified as tobacco users.
8. Tobacco prevention education will be incorporated into the classroom curricula as part of making healthy life choices.
9. Staff may access any of the tobacco cessation resources in an effort to quit their own tobacco use.
10. All Head Start sites, parking lots, and the main office will display "Tobacco Free" signs.