

## Smoke-free Playgrounds

### Essential Information

**Have you ever wondered if your younger brother or sister, or other young relatives are being harmed by secondhand smoke and cigarette butt litter?** To ensure their protection create a city ordinance that will not permit smoking 25-feet from a tot-lot (playground).

Age Group: Middle school, high school and above

Number of Participants: 8 or more

Time: 3-4 months

Resources: Signage, containers for cigarette butts, paper, latex gloves, cups

Cost: up to \$100, including signage

Have you ever noticed the ironic setting of people smoking in or around a tot-lot? Well, to put an end to this dangerous situation, you can create a city ordinance that will make sure that smoke can't be within 25 feet of a playground. This will create another smoke-free environment that will benefit many, especially children at the playground.

#### 4 Months Out:

- Go to a local park with a playground and watch whether or not there is active smoking occurring
- Do two cigarette butt clean-ups – see the “Cigarette Butt Clean Up” activity in the KBD guide. Do your second clean-up about a week after the first. If you are still picking up a significant amount of cigarette butts this will show you how consistently smoking is happening at that playground.
- This will help you understand whether or not smoking is an issue at that particular playground.
- Once you have your evidence, tell the public. You can send out a press release with your findings – see the “Getting Noticed” section of the KBD guide for tips and sample materials.

#### 3 Months Out:

- Draft a city ordinance to make the playground smoke-free. Check out “Working to Pass a Local Ordinance” in the KBD guide for all of the details on how to do this.
- Present this to your city officials and see when you can get onto the City Council agenda.
- Once you confirm that your ordinance is on the agenda, identify one or two city council members that you feel will support your efforts and help bring your ordinance forward to other members.
- Confirm the date with the City Council that your ordinance will be considered.

#### 2 Months Out:

- Continue to generate support for your ordinance. Meet with City Council members, create a petition for community members to sign in support, and attend health fairs to educate the community about your ordinance.
- Start preparing your remarks, and recruit others to speak out in support of your ordinance at the upcoming City Council Meeting or Hearing.

#### 1 Month Out:

- Start planning for implementation so you are prepared if your ordinance passes. Have a plan on how to provide signage that says “No Smoking 25-feet from the playground.”
  - Talk to the your local health department or a local public health organization about helping to fund the signs.
- Finalize remarks for the hearing. Have pre-planned speeches from youth, parents and health oriented individuals like doctors or staff at organizations like the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, or American Lung Association.

#### Your City Council Meeting or Hearing:

- Be prepared! Make sure everyone has their notes and speeches ready for their remarks in front of the Council. Bring any petitions, letters of support and relevant research to present to the council at your hearing.
- Provide all of the facts about the dangers of secondhand smoke. Visit [tobaccofreekids.org](http://tobaccofreekids.org) or take a look at the fact sheets on your KBD CD-ROM for more details.

#### Follow-up and enforcement:

- If your ordinance PASSES get ready to continue educating the public!
- Be sure to send out a press release announcing the new ordinance, and hold a get together at a community park at one of the smoke-free playgrounds.
- It is very important to ensure that the ordinance will be enforced, so check up on the tot-lots in your city. Keep track of any signs that may be damaged and need replacement, make note of cigarette butt litter within 25 feet of the tot-lot, and let your local officials know if people seem to be violating the new ordinance.

Here’s some additional advice from Thania Balcorta of Winters, CA to help your ordinance pass. Thania submitted this activity after she helped pass smoke-free playground policies in her hometown and surrounding areas.

- Have parents send e-mails, calls or letters to city council member and the editor of the local newspaper.
- Be visible, whether it be name tags or t-shirts, and well represented by recruiting as many supporters as possible to attend the City Council meeting.
- Do research on how many babies and children have been affected by smoking around parks and playgrounds. For example, there have been many reports of children swallowing cigarette butts at parks. Collect news reports on this issue and present your findings to the City Council.
- Recruit parent-oriented groups, like the PTA (Parent Teacher Association), throughout your town to support your cause.

Interested in more? Check out the rest of your **KBD CR-ROM** and **[kickbuttsday.org](http://kickbuttsday.org)** to find out more about the fight against tobacco and what youth advocates across the country are doing to take action.