

WSPTA recognizes that climate change is an immediate health crisis for all children and youth. We have the moral responsibility to act now to mitigate the negative effects of climate change.

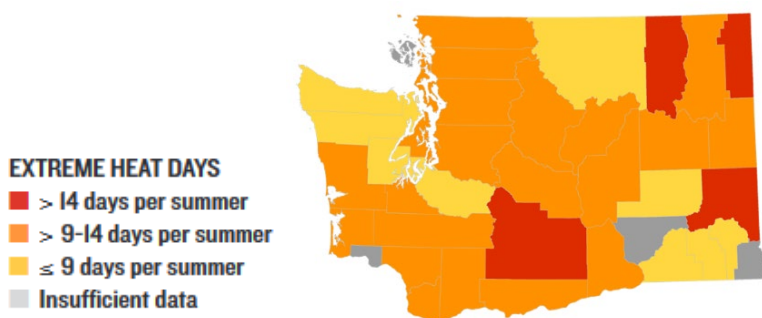
Background

Children are more vulnerable to climate change because their immune systems, lungs and bodies are still developing. They have a higher metabolism and play outside where there are more dangerous pathogens. Infants and high school athletes are at high risk to extreme heat.^{1,2} Image.²

Vulnerability to the Health Impacts of Climate Change at Different Life Stages

 <p>Mothers and babies</p> <p>Adverse pregnancy outcomes such as low birth weight and preterm birth have been linked to extreme heat events, airborne particulate matter, and floods.</p>	 <p>Infants and toddlers</p> <p>Young children’s biological sensitivity places them at greater risk from asthma, diarrheal illness, and heat-related illness.</p>	 <p>School age and older children</p> <p>The behaviors and activities of older children increase their risk of exposure to heat-related illness, vector-borne and waterborne disease, and respiratory effects from air pollution and allergens.</p>
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- Some families are more impacted by “fire, flood, drought, or extreme heat because of where they live or work. How well a family or community bounces back from climate events can be affected by poverty, language barriers, and access to healthcare and insurance.” --UW Climate Impacts Group³



“Extreme heat days” are defined as June, July, and August days from 2007 to 2016 on which the maximum temperature at a given weather station fell within the top 10 percent of readings made at that station from 1961 to 1990. Nine extreme heat days per summer, on average, would be expected if temperatures were not increasing over time.”--Natural Resources Defense Council⁴

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“My life expectancy could be shortened because of how rapidly the climate is warming.”
-- 14-year-old Lilah Amon-Lucas, at the September 2019 Youth Climate Strike (YCS) in Seattle⁵

“Minority groups and people of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to live in environmentally hazardous areas and experience asthma, heart attacks and premature death. They’re directly feeling the effects of climate change more than their white counterparts. Black and brown lungs matter.” -- Parisa Harvey, a 15-year-old YCS organizer⁵

Proposed Solutions

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that build a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable climate for our children that:

- Adopt and enforce legislation that mitigates the effects of climate change
- Provide funding and technical assistance to jurisdictions to develop, and implement Strategic Climate Action Plans that reduce school district, community and regional greenhouse gas emissions
- Equitably address adverse impacts to communities disproportionately affected by climate change
- Acknowledge that climate change is a health crisis that disproportionately and adversely impacts children and youth

Citations

1. Samantha Ahdoot, MD, FAAP, et al. “Global Climate Change and Children’s Health.” *Pediatrics*. AAP. November 2015. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/136/5/e1468>
2. Gamble, J.L., et al. 2016: Ch. 9: Populations of Concern. *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment*. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, 247–286. <https://health2016.globalchange.gov/populations-concern>
3. UW Climate Impacts Group. “An Unfair Share: Climate Change Hits Some Harder Than Others.” UW. https://cig.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/AnUnfairShare_GraphicSummary.pdf
4. Natural Resources Defense Council. “Climate Change and Health in Washington.” September 2019. <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/climate-change-health-impacts-washington-ib.pdf>
5. Evan Bush. “‘The youth are watching’: Global Climate Strike draws students, adult allies to Friday demonstrations in Seattle.” *Seattle Times*. September 20, 2019. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/the-youth-are-watching-global-climate-strike-to-draw-students-adult-allies-to-friday-demonstrations/>