



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Northeast Kingdom Community Action Tests Child Care Centers for Radon

For Immediate Release: Mar. 4, 2013

Media Contacts:

Vermont Department of Health
802-863-7281

BARTON – The Vermont Department of Health is testing child care facilities in Newport, Lyndonville, St. Johnsbury and Derby for radon gas at the request of Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA). Eventually, NEKCA hopes to test all 14 of their early childhood education centers. Nearly 200 children are educated and cared for by NEKCA Head Start.

“By testing for radon and switching to ‘greener’ cleaning products, we can create a better environment for the children,” said Linda Michniewicz, program director for NEKCA Head Start. “We want to reduce the risk of radon, and work to improve the overall air quality as well.”

The testing is mandated nationally by Head Start and included in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Action Plan to reduce the risk of radon in schools and childcare facilities. Prolonged exposure to radon, a colorless, odorless gas, is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States.

“I was under the impression that you only had to test for radon in buildings with basements, but that’s not true,” Michniewicz said. “We’re hoping that by telling parents about the testing in our childcare centers it will educate parents about the possible health risk and lead them to test their homes as well.”

The Health Department sent 1,726 free test kits to homeowners and businesses upon request in 2011, and 2,034 kits in 2012. Test kits are still available.

Radon gas can get into your home from the soil and the water supply. A house can act like a large chimney, with warm air rising and escaping out upper floor windows and through cracks in the attic. This creates a vacuum at the lowest level of the house, which can pull the radon from the soil into the house.

The cost of having a certified professional properly ventilate a home can range from \$800 to \$2,500, depending on the home’s size and shape.

For a free test kit, email your request to radon@state.vt.us. Put the words “radon test kit” in the subject line and be sure to include your name, phone number, and both your mailing and physical address, or call 1-800-439-8550.

For more information visit the Health Department at healthvermont.gov. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and join us on [Facebook](#) for up-to-date news, alerts and health information.

###

