

SMART GROWTH AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

*How Connecticut's current development is hurting every community . . .
and why smarter growth may be the answer.*

created by

THE **CENTEREDGE** PROJECT

This fact sheet is a brief summary of a translation paper on smart growth, part of a series produced by the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. The full papers can be found on the Funders' Network website, www.fundersnetwork.org

Children's Health: The Problem

- **Children are hurt** by current patterns of growth in both cities and suburbs across the United States.
- The concentration of lower-income families in cities with fewer resources makes it **impossible for cities to provide the essential services children need**: education, health care, and a safe environment to grow up in.
- At the same time, families that move to suburban areas face a new set of challenges that can negatively impact their children's health, including **pollution, loss of open space, and traffic congestion**.

Health and Safety

- Street design in both cities and suburbs that prioritizes ease of car travel **endangers the safety of children who are unable to walk or bike safely**.
- **In addition, worsening air pollution due to increased automobile emissions** can have an extremely harmful impact on children's health and has led to skyrocketing rates of children's asthma.

- Limited opportunities for exercise has led to **increased rates of childhood obesity** and attendant health problems for all children in all communities.

Quality of Life for Parents and Children

- Increased sprawl, poor public transportation and increased traffic congestion require **parents to spend more and more time driving every day**, limiting the time they can spend with their families.
- The lack of safe and accessible pedestrian walkways means young people have fewer opportunities to **explore, grow and become more independent**.
- **More children are attending large schools outside of their neighborhoods**, making it more difficult for parents to be involved in their children's education.

An Opportunity for Positive Change

- **Working to protect the environments in which children live**—the air they breathe, the streets they walk on, and the open space they enjoy—is an essential part of ensuring they grow up safely and happily.

For more information about smart growth, how it affects your community and what you can do, contact the CenterEdge Project.

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