

# Pesticides and You

News from the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP)

*One in a Series of NCAMP "How-To's"*

## Expelling Pesticides from School

Pesticides in schools can pose real hazards to children and staff, and people around the country are working to make schools a healthier place to work and learn.

Pest control is not usually a large item in a school's budget, and administrators may be uninformed, and not very interested in investigating alternatives. So, it is likely to be up to you to educate and motivate parents, students, and staff.

•••**Educate yourself about pesticide hazards** and the increased susceptibility and exposure of children.

•••**Become knowledgeable about alternatives** and learn the language of integrated pest manage-

ment (IPM), a system for pest-specific prevention and least-toxic control. EPA's forthcoming IPM booklet for school administrators will be a tool.

•••**Identify the pest control operator:** the school or a contractor.

•••**Establish new guidelines for contract work**, including principles of IPM, if your school hires services.

•••**Get to know your school's pest control provider**, who may be in maintenance or food services. In a *friendly* way, find out what pest problems exist, how they are handled, what chemicals are used, and what concerns pest managers have. Then, try to develop an interest in IPM. If the staff is

behind you, you will get further faster.

•••**Find out the cost of the current program**, and create a comparative budget for an IPM program.

•••**Cultivate interest** of parents, students, and teachers. PTA meetings are a good forum.

•••**Encourage teachers** to teach about pest life cycles, and to include elements of IPM in their curriculums.

•••**Be willing to do the work**, including locating IPM training resources, finding an IPM consultant, drafting an IPM policy, and formulating a new pest control contract.

•••**Network with people** who have been successful in working with other schools.

NCAMP's full schools packet including pesticide hazards, children at risk, IPM on a budget, and training resources is available for \$15.