

Beginning in the fall of 2008, all Iowa children have to have proof of a blood lead test before starting kindergarten. Physicians and laboratories report all tests to the Iowa Department of Public Health, who will let you and the school, know if they do not have a record of the test.

Lead has adverse effects on nearly all organ systems in the body. It is especially harmful to the developing brains and nervous systems of children under the age of six years. Children's intelligence, hearing, and growth are affected. Statewide, the prevalence of lead poisoning among children under the age of six years is 7 percent. This is more than four times the national average of 1.6 percent. Most of Iowa's pre-1950 homes contain lead-based paint. Young children who live in pre-1950 homes become lead-poisoned when they put paint chips or exterior soil in their mouths or when they get house dust and soil on their hands and put their hands in their mouths. In addition, adults who remodel or repaint these homes may be lead-poisoned if they disturb the lead-based paint. Although lead poisoning can cause serious health problems--including death--most lead-poisoned children demonstrate no visible symptoms. This makes it much more important to have an effective program to prevent childhood lead poisoning. To find out more about this very important test go to: http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/common/pdf/lead/parents_qa.pdf