

# Relationship between smoke-free law and children in the home

December 20 2013, by Ann Blackford

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The greatest gift parents can give their children is a smoke-free home in which to live and grow up healthy.

A study conducted by the University of Kentucky College of Nursing and UK HealthCare, recently published online in the *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* Journal, examined the relationship of having a smoke-free home, strength of smoke-free law in the county of residence, having one or more minor children in the home, rural/urban location, and other demographics.

Secondhand smoke is the leading cause of childhood illness and premature death, especially in rural areas. Worldwide, there are 600,000 deaths annually from [secondhand smoke](#); 165,000 of those are children. Elimination of the source of tobacco smoke is the only way to completely protect nonsmokers, including children, from secondhand smoke.

The UK study was an internet-based panel survey administered to 400 to 500 Kentucky residents per year from 2007 to 2012. Most of the participants were females between the age of 35 and 54 with at least some college education and living in a smoke-free home. Almost half of the participants lived in a county with a comprehensive smoke-free law (all workplaces and public places totally smoke-free) and 14 percent of the participants lived in a county with a moderate or weak law (some places excluded from the law).

Results of the study revealed significant predictors of having a smoke-free home, included education beyond high school, being a nonsmoker, living in an urban county, and the year of participation in the study.

Controlling for smoking status and other personal characteristics, those who responded to the survey in the last two years of administration were more likely to have a smoke-free home compared to those in 2007. Respondents living in urban counties were nearly two times more likely to report a smoke-free home than rural dwellers.

"The good news is that more and more Kentuckians have made their homes smoke-free since 2007," said Ellen Hahn, professor in the College of Nursing and director of the Kentucky Center for Smoke-free Policy and co-author of the paper. "The bad news is that having [children](#) at home does not necessarily mean the home is smoke-free. Our local health departments are in desperate need of funding to promote smoke-free homes especially in rural areas, with smokers, and those with less

education. Otherwise, the next generation of Kentuckians is doomed to a life of early death and disease."

**More information:** Karen M. Butler, Mary Kay Rayens, Kristin Ashford, Sarah Adkins, Bill Gombeski, Jason Britt, and Ellen J. Hahn, "Smoke-Free Homes, Strength of Smoke-Free Law, and Children in the Home." *Nicotine Tob Res* first published online December 3, 2013. [DOI: 10.1093/ntr/ntt191](https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntt191)

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