

***LET'S START WITH THE KIDS***  
**HOW TO RECOGNIZE & PREVENT ENVIRONMENTAL CHILD ABUSE (ECA)**  
***By Toni Temple, President, ONFCI***

Today, the ever-escalating and frightening percentages of diseases and disabilities in children and babies requires that strict attention be given to all possible causes. Many childhood illnesses may be the direct result of Environmental Child Abuse (ECA) not yet recognized or readily accepted.

Too many times heredity, genetic factors, prior medical protocol, parental preferences, insurance companies and even prescription advertising dictate the improper diagnoses and treatments for many conditions. Most physicians do not recognize toxic poisoning and fail to ask pertinent questions concerning the child's environment. To be a responsible parent it is important that you ask the physician questions about pesticides, cleaning agents, soaps and other items listed below. Educate yourself so you can engage the physician in discussions concerning the environmental factors that affect your child's health. Take this flyer with you, discuss it and give the physician a copy. Currently only fundraising and research for cures are stressed. Prevention is seldom mentioned and never paid for or reimbursed by health care financing agencies. Education and consumer demand can change this.

**What is Environmental Child Abuse?**

Environmental Child Abuse is the act of intentionally and/or unintentionally subjecting any child to environmental contaminants that harm the child, the child is unable to escape from them and the contamination could have been prevented.

**Examples of Intentional Child Abuse:**

Performing any of these activities when a child is present:

- Smoking
- Using Pesticides (indoors and/or outdoors)
- Painting with toxic paints and using toxic paint removers, sealers, etc.
- Using toxic disinfectants and cleaning products (disinfectants are registered pesticides)
- Spraying of aerosols (including deodorant, hair spray, bathroom fresheners, PAM and other cooking sprays)
- Using room fresheners, potpourris, plug in scents and oils, moth balls and other products manufactured with toxic ingredients
- Leaving a child in a non-moving vehicle with the engine running (exhaust seeps into the car)

**Other Environmental Child Abuse:**

Failure to read labels and educate yourself about the products you purchase and use near children

Failure to educate yourself about the health effects some foods you provide to your children may cause (those that contain dyes, preservatives, msg, artificial sweeteners, sulfites, pesticides and pesticide waxes, some vitamins, etc.). The ingredients in cereals, snacks and beverages should be especially reviewed.

Failure to environmentally educate those who are caregivers for your children:

- Day Care Centers and babysitters
- Schools
- Physicians, hospitals and other health care providers

Neglect in supervising what your child is exposed to at:

- Movie theatres (artificial scents, air fresheners, deodorizers, pesticides, isocyanates from foar cushions, chemically treated popcorn and snacks)

Sports fields (pesticides, herbicides, molds, treated wood)  
Libraries (molds, pesticides, carpeting)  
Churches (incense, carpeting, burning candles)  
Grocery stores (pesticides which are used to prevent pest problems and the pesticides in the air from the pesticides in foods and on the flowers).

### **How Can We Prevent Environmental Child Abuse?**

How can we, as an intelligent society, work together to recognize and prevent unnecessary exposure and illnesses?

1. Educate ourselves
2. Educate others
3. Demand and follow safer food and water standards
4. Demand safer, least toxic products
5. Refuse to base our decisions for products on advertising and commercial safety claims - do your own research and compare notes with your family and friends
6. Read labels and research questionable additives and ingredients (especially in foods, Rx's)
7. Ask for legislation for disclosure of inert (hidden) ingredients in all foods and products
8. Refuse to allow your children to dictate what they will eat, drink, wear or use. TV advertising is directed at children and teens because they are dictating. Educate your children too!
9. VOTE! And know all about the people you are voting for. If they do a good job, let them know. If they don't, let everyone else know.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:**

The internal organs of infants and children are still developing and maturing which makes them more vulnerable to health risks posed by pesticides and other chemicals. Therefore, a child will be affected more rapidly and with more serious consequences by toxic assaults on their bodies than would most adults. (EPA)

It is very difficult to find a physician that has been trained in environmental medicine. Most physicians are not trained to diagnose the health effects and the resultant nutritional deficiencies caused by toxic exposures. Your child may very easily be misdiagnosed as having depression, learning disabilities, behavioral disorders and more when what they are suffering from is a side effect to a toxic exposure. Worse yet, your child may be placed on pharmaceuticals that can cause further harm to health.

Once chemicals are introduced into the body it is difficult, if not impossible to undo the damage. Physicians treat symptoms and pain but do not know how to prevent the resultant disease processes from taking place and cannot recognize them until symptoms are present (i.e., leukemia caused by benzene exposures, asthma caused by asbestos, anemias caused by chemical exposures.) The health problems caused by many toxic exposures may not be immediately apparent and can show up years later. You are the only one who can protect your child from potential harm by preventing unnecessary exposures.

There is no regulatory agency that monitors or governs the ingredients used in cosmetics, health and beauty aids

90% of the 80,000 chemicals we live with have never been tested for safety... Current law allows 350 different pesticides to be used in the foods we eat... The average home today contains 3-10 gallons of hazardous materials. Even the products we think are safe may not be \*\*

\* Parmas' -The cities of Parma and Parma Heights, OH

\*\* (Children's Health Environmental Coalition—Not Under My Roof)

- ***Information provided by the Ohio Network for the Chemically Injured (ONFCI) P.O. Box 29290, Parma, Ohio 44129 (440) 845-1888***