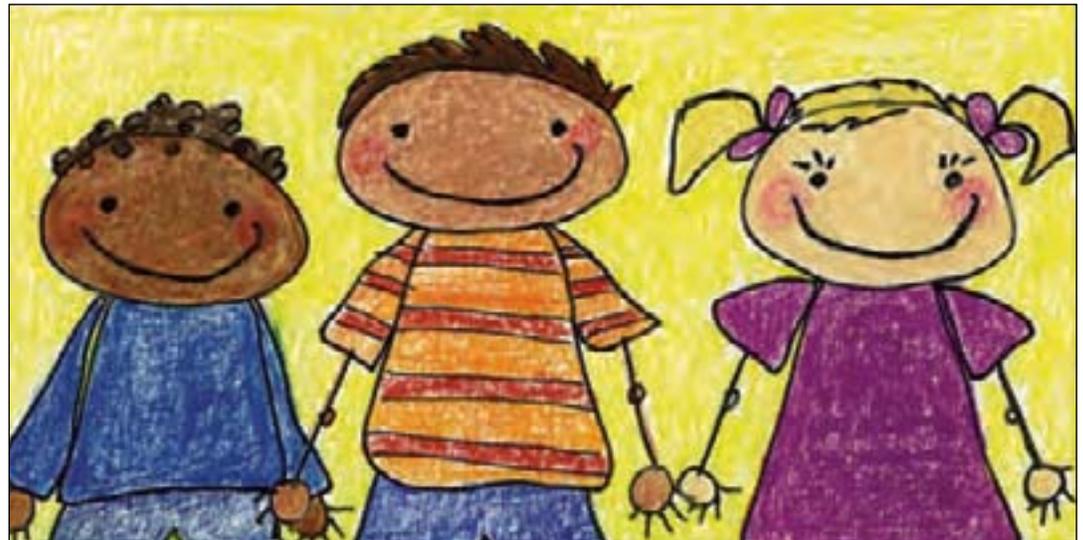


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Healthy Children Project Partnership

NHLDA has been fortunate to receive a mini-grant from Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families. The goal of the partnership is to conduct information dissemination regarding the Healthy Children Project in New Hampshire in keeping with LDA mission to create opportunities for success for all individuals affected by learning disabilities and to reduce the incidence of learning disabilities in future generations. LDA seeks to accomplish this through awareness, advocacy, empowerment, education, service and collaborative efforts.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America, through its Healthy Children Project, is part of the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Coalition. Research increasingly points to the role of toxic chemicals in the rise of learning and developmental disabilities in New Hampshire and across the country. It makes sense that New Hampshire residents overwhelmingly support the Safe Chemicals Act out of concern for our children and families. We want and deserve to be protected from unsafe chemicals. □

Stay Informed, Raise Your Voice & Take Action

Email Alerts for NHLDA Members

Would like to receive email alerts from NHLDA and LDA of America about the Healthy Children Project?

We want you to be informed and we want to keep Healthy Children Project initiatives “on the radar screen” so progress can be made in promoting healthy environments for our

children, youth and families. You could then choose to make a call, write a letter to a legislator, write a letter to the editor to your local newspaper, attend a meeting and continue to spread the word. Of course, this is voluntary. To become involved, send your name and email address to info@nhlda.org and you will be added to the list for forwarded messages.

**NHLDA OFFICERS
2011-2012**

Beverly Boggess,
President

Nancy Charron,
Secretary

Tatiana Lassonde,
Treasurer

**NHLDA
BOARD MEMBERS
NOVEMBER 2011 –
OCTOBER 2012**

Beverly Boggess

Nancy Charron

Deborah Russo Jameson

Tatiana Lassonde

Carol Shapira

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A Message from Our President

By Beverly W. Boggess, Ph.D. 2011-12 President

Spring is a time for hope and new beginnings. It's time to look ahead to fresh starts and new energy.

Looking back, I am very thankful that our Fall 2011 Conference was quite successful with dynamic speakers who provided thought-provoking ideas to help us promote self-development within children, youth and young adults who experience learning disabilities. We welcomed new members who are eager to bring their skills, talents and perspectives to NHLDA. To start off the new year in January, I participated in a conference call with LDA of America President Pat Lillie, State Affiliate Coach Shirley Hiltz-Adams and three other state presidents. In February, I represented NH at the national conference and found out about trends such as difficulties for parents to obtain testing. I also presented a session on transition from high school to postsecondary education, "Turning Access into Success."

Looking through a wide lens, the LDA of America envisions "... a world in which: all individuals with learning disabilities are empowered to thrive and participate fully in society;

the incidence of learning disabilities is reduced; and learning disabilities are universally understood and effectively addressed." In keeping with the second and third points, NHLDA has embarked upon our educational and preventative functions and joined with LDA of America's Healthy Children Project. A mini-grant in partnership with the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Coalition will help us spread the word about healthy environments for children and youth.

Given these persisting challenges and the current economic climate, it is imperative to keep the interests of persons with learning disabilities on the "front burner." In the words of Jermaine Davis, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing!" The need for your involvement and enthusiasm remains. Find out more about these vital issues and how we can make gains toward our vision.

Wishing you an energetic and meaningful Spring!

Sincerely,

Beverly Boggess,
2011-12 President

IN THIS ISSUE

The theme of this newsletter, as well as our upcoming Fall Conference, is "Promoting Healthy Environments for Our Children, Youth and Families." You will find many articles related to NHLDA's new partnership with the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Coalition. Find out how to become informed, get involved, raise your voice and take action.

Also included are:

- A summary of our Fall 2011 Conference and annual report of activities

- Highlights of the LDA of America 2012 International Conference including an environmental forum sponsored by the LDA Healthy Children Project
- A biography of new Board Member Melissa Wolfe
- A preview of our Fall 2012 conference featuring Maureen Swanson of LDA and Lindsay Dahl of Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families
- A special bonus section of Resources for Parents. □

NHLDA IN THE NEWS

NHLDA Makes National News

NHLDA Board Member Melissa Wolfe and Janet Groat of Safer Chemicals, Health Families attended the Stroller Brigade in Washington, DC on May 21, 2012. They were featured in an article on Huffington Post and interviewed (read more at this link): http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/22/national-stroller-brigade-toxic-chemical-reform_n_1536587.html?ref=green)

Janet stated: “The event in DC was great and it was a privilege to be there.” While in Washington, our two NH Moms were scheduled to meet with Representative Charlie Bass and the staff of NH Senators Ayotte and Shaheen to raise awareness about the Safe Chemicals Act. With Maureen Swanson of LDA’s Healthy Children Project and members of LDA affiliates of New York, Arkansas, Michigan and Maine, they also delivered more than 125,000 hand-signed petitions to members of Congress. Both were interviewed by reporters, and Melissa shared her experiences with her son. Find out more at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/24/autism-toxic-chemicals-children-environment-risk-factors_n_1543316.html

Lindsay Dahl, Deputy director of Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, organized this national event. This coming Fall,



From left Christy Funk, Lisa Allen, Melissa Wolfe and Janet Groat at the Stroller Brigade in Washington, DC. Maureen Swanson and Lindsay Dahl are slated to come to NH to speak at the NHLDA Conference. Watch for Melissa’s and Janet’s personal accounts of this inspiring event plus news on NHLDA conference plans on our website www.nhllda.org. □

New Hampshire moms head to U.S. Capital for “National Stroller Brigade”

Chemical-soaked baby products become potent new symbol in wake of Chicago Tribune exposé

By Janet Groat and Beverly W. Boggess, Ph.D. 2011-12 President

Two New Hampshire mothers will join hundreds of others in Washington, DC to demand action on toxic chemicals. Citing concerns for their own children and the nation’s children, they are rallying behind an effort to overhaul the country’s outdated and ineffective law governing chemicals.

Melissa Wolfe of Brentwood and Janet Groat of Portsmouth will join hundreds of moms in Washington for the “National Stroller Brigade.” The event is planned to build support for the Safer

Chemicals Act, introduced by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) in the Senate. In addition, a busload of mothers, nurses and environmentalists will be traveling down from Maine.

“If there is one overwhelming message from years of science, it’s that exposure to toxic chemicals early in our lives is responsible for some of the cancer, infertility, and other health problems that affect millions of Americans,” said Andy Igrejas of Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families. “However, Congress has

Continued on page 5

How To “Talk” So Your Legislator Will Listen

By Shirley Hiltz-Adams, LDA of America State Affiliate Coach

- IDENTIFY yourself and give your home address when phoning or writing.
- DESCRIBE the issue or bill that concerns you.
- Refer to the BILL NUMBER, if possible.
- Tell the legislator what ACTION you want.
- Mention any special CREDENTIALS you have.
- State key REASONS for your views.
- Put a HUMAN FACE on the issue: share personal experiences.
- COUNTER arguments the opposition is using, if you can.
- If you make a mistake, CORRECT it immediately.
- Limit writing to ONE ISSUE or one bill.
- Be BRIEF.
- Ask for a REPLY.
- Find out which legislators support your position and get COMMITMENT for action.
- Ask what you can do to further SHARED GOALS.
- Be POLITE, keeping the door open for future communication.
- Send a THANK YOU or follow-up letter when appropriate.



Healthy Families Coalition Group Visits Congressman Charles Bass in January, 2012.

Top row from left Amanda Sears, Lindsay Carmichael, Terry Ellsworth, Congressman Charles Bass, Debby DeMoulpied, Beverly Boggess; bottom row Janet Groat, Jan McGonagle.

Taking Action To Raise Awareness

By Beverly W. Boggess, Ph.D. 2011-12 President.

In January, I was delighted to accompany a group of other interested individuals to visit NH Congressman Charlie Bass to voice our concerns for the updating of the Toxic Substances Control Act. Coordinator Janet Groat of Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families brought together our group which included pediatrician Dr. Jan McGonagle, green merchant Debby DeMoulpied, environmental scientist Amanda Sears, public health educator and author Lindsey Carmichael, preschool director Terry Ellsworth, and me, representing NHLDA and LDA of America’s Healthy Children Project. Congressman Bass cordially listened carefully to our concerns, put us in touch with his legislative aide and expressed interest in his constituents’ views. □

Who are your Senators and Representatives?

U.S. Representative Frank Guinta

1223 Longworth HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 225-5456
 (202) 225-5822
[https://guinta.house.gov/contact-me/
 email-me](https://guinta.house.gov/contact-me/email-me)

U.S. Representative Charlie Bass

2350 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 225-5206
 (202) 225-2946
[https://forms.house.gov/bass/web-
 forms/contact-form.shtml](https://forms.house.gov/bass/web-forms/contact-form.shtml)

U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte

144 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington DC, 20510
 (202) 224-3324
 (202) 224-4952
www.ayotte.senate.gov/?p=contact

U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen

520 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510
 (202) 224-2841
 (202) 228-3194
shaheen.senate.gov/contact/

New Hampshire moms head to U.S. Capital for “National Stroller Brigade”

Continued from page 3

been paralyzed. We’re gathering people who care about this to break the gridlock and demand common sense limits on toxic chemicals.”

The nation’s law governing chemicals, passed in 1976, gives little power to the federal government to regulate them. It grandfathered in thousands of chemicals and chemical compounds without testing for health or safety.

In the years since, the use of chemicals has become widespread – in plastics, toys, mattresses, pillows, and baby shampoos, for example. Meanwhile, scientific evidence has mounted, showing links between certain chemicals and cancers, endocrine disorders and impaired brain development.

Wolfe, a mother of three, got involved through the Learning Disabilities Association of New Hampshire and its Healthy Children Project. She has a 4-year-old with autism, and she is concerned about the toxins he and other children are exposed to in their daily lives. Wolfe is a Board Member of the NH Learning Disabilities Association, a grassroots organization of parents and professionals to promote education and awareness to support children, youth and adults with learning disabilities and their families.

“My four-year-old, because of his developmental delays, is on the floor a lot more than most kids – picking up the chemical-laden dust that ends up on our floors and in our carpets,” she said. “He also sucks his thumb – and he doesn’t think to wash his hands before he puts it in his mouth.

“As a mom and a consumer, there isn’t enough information available for me to protect my kids from these risks,” she said. “We are left in the dark and our kids become guinea pigs. We should not have to wait until 30 years of research proves something is harmful before it is regulated.”

“It wasn’t until I had a child that I realized that so much of what we buy in the stores can actually harm us,” said Janet Groat, a

“It wasn’t until I had a child that I realized that so much of what we buy in the stores can actually harm us...”

mother of two from Portsmouth. “We all tend to assume that if a product is on the shelf it’s safe, but that’s not necessarily so.”

The national Stroller Brigade builds on 30 local events in support of the Safe Chemicals Act, in locations as diverse as Augusta and Little Rock. Hundreds of moms – many with children in tow – have been meeting with U.S. Senators in their home states. They will converge in Washington to deliver 125,000 petition signatures to Capitol Hill.

The mothers’ cause was buoyed by a recent Chicago Tribune exposé of deceptive lobbying tactics among manufacturers of flame retardants. The exposé, published in early May, disclosed that chemical industry spokespeople have manipulated research data to increase sales of their products. It also disclosed that a physician who frequently testified in favor of flame retardants had fabricated tales of burned infants to help the industry avoid regulation.

The Stroller Brigade will bring together people with diverse backgrounds from about 30 states. For some, this will be their first time meeting with an elected official. The Safe Chemicals Act is awaiting a vote in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Participants in the event hope to add urgency and pressure to the pending vote.

For background on the Safe Chemicals Act, go to www.safechemicals.org.

NHLDA New Board Member



Melissa Wolfe

Melissa Wolfe is currently pursuing her Master's Degree with dual certification in Elementary Education/General Special Education from Southern New Hampshire University. She received her Bachelor's of Arts in Communications with a concentration in Theater Arts from Bridgewater State College (now University) in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. She is proud to be a board member of NHLDA, as well as a student member of the Council for Exceptional Children, and a member of Pi Lambda Theta, the most selective national honor society of educators. Melissa approaches special education as a student, a prospective educator, as well as a parent, having three children, including one with autism. Melissa is looking forward to teaching in an inclusion elementary setting and seeing her students achieve their academic, social, and emotional goals.

NHLDA Annual Report

The following activities were accomplished in 2011:

- The Spring 2011 NHLDA Newsletter featuring the theme "Self-Esteem, Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy" was redesigned with a new logo and format, prepared and disseminated.
- The new website www.nhllda.org was launched with the able assistance of volunteer Craig Spara, such that the domain name coincides with nonprofit status requirements of the state of New Hampshire.
- The NHLDA trifold display was featured at the Transition Summit Conference on November 18, 2011.
- The NHLDA Fall Conference, "Self-Esteem, Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy through the Ages," was held on October 21, 2011.
- NHLDA began planning with the Healthy Children Project and Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Coalition for educational activities and legislative outreach in 2012. □

In Memoriam

NHLDA offers sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Marby Blanchard and Mrs. David (Liz) Parker of Parker Academy. We lost you too soon.

NHLDA Fall 2011 Conference Summary

Our Annual Fall Conference, "Building Self-Esteem, Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy Through The Ages," was held at Southern NH University in Manchester on October 21, 2011. Speakers Gale Hall, Dr. Leo Sandy, and Dr. Eric Vance presented key points for resilience, respectively, in the early childhood years, elementary — middle school years, and adolescence and emerging adulthood years.

Two breakout sessions were held, "Self-Determination" by Dr. Deborah Russo Jameson and "Self-Empowerment Through Technology" by Liz Henley. Dan Huston concluded the program with "Mindfulness Meditation." Our speakers generously donated their time. We welcomed twenty-two new members to NHLDA. Exhibitors from Southern New Hampshire University, Plymouth State University, Franklin Pierce University, and Parker Academy were on hand and donated raffle items. Each participant received a conference program and resource packet. Participants remarked that they enjoyed the knowledge shared, as well as their interaction with speakers and colleagues from the morning activities through the energizing closing meditation.

Special thanks to all the NHLDA Board, including Nancy Charron of SNHU who shared her home campus with us. □

**Our Fall 2012 Conference Planning has begun.
Watch for details on location and date.**

FALL 2012 CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Fall 2012 Conference: Promoting Healthy Environments for Our Children, Youth and Families

The theme for our fall conference will be Promoting Healthy Environments for Our Children, Youth, and Families. **We will offer national speakers to talk about LDA's Healthy Children Project.** LDA created the Healthy Children Project to:

- Raise awareness of environmental factors, particularly toxic chemicals that can harm brain development, contributing to learning disabilities and behavior disorders;
- Prevent toxic chemical exposures, especially among pregnant women and children;
- Build a nationwide network of LDA members working to protect children's health and reduce toxic exposures that may lead to learning disabilities in current and future generations.

At our conference we will learn more about:

- Why children are more at risk from toxic chemicals;
- What toxic chemicals are linked to learning disabilities;
- What chemicals are under investigation for their effects on brain development;
- What steps you can take at home to minimize your family's risk of toxic chemical exposures;
- How we can help prevent toxic exposures to pregnant women, the fetus and newborns;
- What helpful resources can support us.

Introducing the Keynote Speakers for Our Fall 2012 Conference



Maureen Swanson

Maureen Swanson is the national coordinator of the Learning Disabilities Association of America's Healthy Children Project, which is focused on raising awareness of toxic chemicals linked to learning and developmental disabilities, and reducing exposures to toxic chemicals, especially among

pregnant women, infants and children. Prior to her position with LDA, Maureen was a senior policy analyst with the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, and an independent environmental policy consultant, working with clients in government, private corporations and academia. She holds a master's degree from Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs and a bachelor's degree from Bucknell University.



Lindsay Dahl

Lindsay Dahl is Deputy Director of the Safer Chemicals Healthy Families campaign, a national coalition of more than 300 health, environmental, parent and consumer groups, along with businesses, working together to help shape and promote safer chemical policies at

the federal and state levels. The campaign's current focus is The Safe Chemicals Act, which is under consideration in the U.S. Senate, and which would require the testing of chemicals for health effects before they could be used in products. LDA is an active member of SCHF.

For more information see: www.saferchemicals.org

LDA FORUM AT LDA OF AMERICA CONFERENCE:

Environmental Influences In Brain Development and Function: A Lifespan Perspective

Summary by Beverly W. Boggess, Ph.D. 2011-12 President

Dr. Ted Schettler is the Director of the Science and Environmental Health Network and author of several influential books and reports on environmental threats to reproductive health, child development and healthy aging. He is highly regarded nationally and internationally as a doctor, scientist and speaker. Dr. Schettler took a lifespan approach that considers environmental influences from conception through old age. He particularly focused on the interactions among various factors influencing health and development, including nutrition, stress and environmental exposures. Dr. Schettler explained in detail the effects of toxic chemicals on the human body, starting from fetal development through their cumulative effects over time and their triggers at key times of development.

Lindsay Dahl of the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Coalition summarized key issues. She stated that good health is precious and it is getting difficult to avoid threats to our health. From baby bottles made with Bisphenol A to carpets containing formaldehyde, dangerous chemicals are in our homes, places of work, and the products we use every day. Every week, new science is linking toxic chemicals to increases in serious health problems. Rates of asthma, diabetes, childhood cancers, infertility and learning and behavior disorders continues to increase; the federal system that should protect us from health-harming chemicals hasn't changed in 35 years. The Toxic Substances Control Act

“The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has only required testing on about 200 of the 62,000 chemicals that were “grandfathered” in under the law.”

(“TSCA) passed in 1976 and is still in effect. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has only required testing on about 200 of the 62,000 chemicals that were “grandfathered” in under the law. There is a chance to fix this problem and to protect future generations from serious harm.

Science changes, but regulations have not kept up with the research. Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families promotes the reform of the outdated Toxic Substances Control Act as follows to:

1. Take immediate action on the most dangerous chemicals. Persistent, bioaccumulative toxic chemicals, which build up in our bodies and threaten our health, should be phased out of commerce. Exposure to other toxic chemicals that we know can cause serious health problems, such as formaldehyde, should be reduced.
2. Require basic information to identify chemicals of concern. Chemical manufacturers should be held responsible for the safety of their products and required to provide full information on the health and environmental hazards, associated with chemicals they produce. The government, business, and the general public should be given access to information about the safety of chemicals, which under the current law can be kept confidential.
3. Use the best science to protect people and vulnerable groups. Chemicals should meet a standard of safety for all people, including children, pregnant women and workers. The extra burden of Texaco chemical exposure on people of color, low-income and indigenous communities must be reduced. The EPA should adopt the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences on how to better assess risks from chemicals. □

LDA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Highlights from the 49th Annual 2012 LDA International Conference, Chicago, Illinois

Summary by Beverly W. Boggess, Ph.D. 2011-12 President

The Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) International Conference was held February 22-25, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois. This is the location where our grassroots organization of parents, professionals and individuals with learning disabilities was created and incorporated in January, 1964.

Dr. Jerome Shultz reminded us of the neurobiology of stress and learning. He suggested the DESTRESS method: Define; Educate about the impact of stress; Speculate and look ahead to strengths and challenges; Teach strategies to maximize success; Reduce the threat and neutralize the risk; Exercise; Succeed to replace doubt with confidence; and Strategize to use what is learned to plan ahead.

Deb Russell of Walgreen's explained her journey as an educator now at the cutting edge in the business world promoting the philosophy of hiring persons with disabilities as a competitive employment practice. She shared inspirational stories about providing training to supervisors, holding adult workers to the same standards necessary for achieving profits, using universal design for learning (UDL) strategies in work environments, and training other firms with Walgreen's approach.

Dr. Alba Ortiz discussed multicultural aspects to consider in identification and intervention.

LDA's special friend Rick LaVoie who pioneered the film about learning disabilities "F.A.T. City," shared entertaining remarks at the banquet. He commented that it is time for the next generation of educators and parents to take on the mantle of advocacy and support. He stated that the task of education has become a process of learning, unlearning and relearning as technology, such as the cell phone, changes our culture.

There was a special screening of Lee Hirsch's film "Bully" and discussion of the Bully Project with Dr. Larry Silver and other LDA colleagues. The rating of the film was pending at the time, and plans were discussed to provide study guides for its use with students and school personnel. It was stated that every person

“The film's harsh realism felt like a 'punch to the gut' to me and sparked strong feelings of outrage in fellow viewers.”

has experienced being a bully, a victim or a bystander. The "Stand Up" campaign was portrayed poignantly with the parents and siblings of those bullied who committed suicide. The film's harsh realism felt like a "punch to the gut" to me and sparked strong feelings of outrage in fellow viewers. I learned from colleagues that, incredibly, the school Alex attended which had granted permission for filming had already had training about bullying. Later I learned that Alex was in therapy at the time of filming but was reluctant to share what he was experiencing with his parents. Filming was stopped when Alex was being stabbed and choked, and footage was used to enlighten his parents and spur them to action. I was quite relieved to discover that he is doing well now after several years in a new school district where his family moved. He says he now has friends and is happy. He is being congratulated for his bravery and endurance in sharing his experience to teach others. □

“The purpose of human life is to serve and show compassion and the will to help others.”

— Albert Schweitzer

Fragranced Products and Children's Health: Is There a Connection?

by Trish Stansfield, M.Ed., Board Member, NHLDA

It has long been known that environmental pollutants can have adverse health effects. Exposure to toxins such as mercury and lead can negatively impact children's neurological development. Brain development takes place during the gestational period and continues throughout childhood. Anything that disrupts this delicate process can have devastating, long-term, and, sometimes, irreversible effects (Schettler, 2001).

Many harmful contaminants, in the form of toxic chemicals are all around us in the environment, but exactly where can they be found? You may be surprised to learn that some of these toxins can be hidden inside many of the fragranced products we use every day. Growing research suggests that environmental toxins in the form of scented products and products listed with fragrance in their ingredients can interfere with normal neurological development, and, therefore, may contribute to learning disabilities. When we use hair spray, perfumes, air fresheners, and other fragranced products, we are potentially releasing these toxins into the air we breathe. According to the EPA, (cited in Wolff, 2006) neurological health issues including convulsions, migraines, confusion, memory loss, impaired concentration, and toxic brain dysfunction have been linked to fragrance exposure. Additional symptoms unrelated to the neurological system can include respiratory problems, abdominal pain, and cardiovascular dysfunction. All of these effects can harm, not only children, but adults as well (Wolff, 2006).

According to Stanley M. Caress, Ph.D and Anne C. Steinemann, Ph.D., in the March 2009 issue of Journal of Environmental Health, toxins found in some fragranced products may include chemicals such as mercury, limonene, ethanol, acetone, and benzyl acetate. Some fragranced products that may contain harmful chemicals include, but are not limited to, detergents, fabric softeners, dryer sheets, personal care products, scented candles, soaps, shampoos, and various cleaning products. Just

References: See [page 14](#).

“Research ... revealed staggering results showing that over 20 products that are used by consumers on a regular basis emit 17 chemicals each. The research also showed that, out of the many chemicals detected, one fourth of them were considered hazardous.”

one fragrance may contain over one hundred chemicals (Hickey, 2010).

Several studies have been conducted on the harmful effects of chemicals found in fragranced products. Research completed at the University of Washington revealed staggering results showing that over 20 products that are used by consumers on a regular basis emit 17 chemicals each. The research also showed that, out of the many chemicals detected, one fourth of them were considered hazardous (Hickey, 2010). Surveys conducted between the years 2002 and 2006 reveal that a large percentage of the American population have adverse reactions to fragranced products (Caress & Steinemann, 2009).

Right now, you may be wondering why these products are available to the general public if they are not considered safe. The reason for this is because, currently, there is no government regulation requiring manufacturers to list ingredients in fragranced products. If any testing is done on these products at all, manufacturers do not have to share their data with the FDA (Franz & Prall, 2000). Henceforth, consumers are not privy to this information. Law makers did introduce a bill to Congress entitled The Household Product Labeling Act of 2009, which would require manufacturers to provide a list of all ingredients in their products, but the bill has never been enacted. □

Strong Interest In Safer Chemicals

A recent poll of New Hampshire voters shows overwhelming bi-partisan support for reforming and strengthening the nation's outdated law for regulating the use of toxic chemicals. The poll, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies — the largest Republican polling firm in the country — was released by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which supports legislation called the [Safe Chemicals Act \(S.847.IS\)](#), a bill that would increase the safety of chemicals used in consumer products and the workplace.

A poll of New Hampshire voters conducted by Public Opinion Strategies found that:

- Seventy seven percent of state voters indicate support for stricter regulation of chemicals produced and used in the United States (only 17 percent oppose), with support across the political spectrum and among all demographic sub-groups. Support for “stronger safety standards” for such chemicals is even stronger, with 83% support overall and 12% opposed.
- There is strong support for legislation that has been introduced in the Senate, the Safe Chemicals Act, a bill that would increase safety of chemicals used in commerce. After having

the major elements of the legislation described, three-in-four voters (76 percent) supported the proposal (43 percent strongly supported) while 21 percent opposed it (11 percent strongly).

- Support for reforming out of date federal law is strongly bi-partisan and broad-based. Seventy-four percent say that Congress should act now on chemical reform rather than waiting. □

Raise Your Voice!

The Safer Chemicals Act is currently under consideration in the U.S. Senate. This proposal would update and improve the federal government's ability to regulate chemical use to protect children from learning disorders and disabling conditions. It would also protect other vulnerable groups.

Elected officials need to know you care. Call both of your U.S. Senators at the numbers listed on page 3. Ask them to co-sponsor the Safer Chemicals Act.

What You Can Do To Keep Yourself and Your Children Safe

by Trish Stansfield, M.Ed., Board Member, NHLDA

Until such time as lawmakers require manufacturers to label their products with all of the ingredients they contain, what can we do to keep ourselves and our children safe? The following is a list of suggested guidelines to follow when considering the use of scented products:

- Beware of scented candles or slow-burning candles with additives
- Candles with wire wicks can release lead into the air
- Consider using candles made with pure beeswax — they emit less pollution
- Use fragranced products sparingly in a well-ventilated area and away from children
- Instead of air fresheners, use herbs and spices, an open box of baking soda, or wooden sticks dipped in natural oils
- Don't rely on fragrance-free products — they may still contain a fragrance that is used to cover up any detectable scent
- Schools, daycares, and other places frequented by children should strongly encourage a “scent-free” environment
- Scented dryer sheets may contain chemicals such as chloroform and benzyl acetate — both are known carcinogens

Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Campaign

By Janet Groat

New Hampshire has joined a growing number of states where parents, educators, health professionals and lawmakers are working together to protect children from toxic chemicals.

In the absence of a strong federal law, many states, cities and counties have taken matters into their own hands.

Nearby Maine has earned wide acclaim for passage of the Kids Safe Products Act, the first comprehensive safe chemical policy in the United States. There, the Learning Disabilities Association of Maine worked with the Environmental Health Strategies Center — along with parents, environmentalists and others — to bring about this landmark legislation. The law requires manufacturers to disclose their use of specific “chemicals of high concern” in everyday products, such as toys and plastics. It also gives the state authority to require safer alternatives.

Several states, including New Hampshire, have stepped in to consider how best to reduce children’s exposure to Bisphenol A (BPA). This chemical compound is known to be damaging to young children and babies in utero, even at low levels. BPA is an endocrine disruptor — meaning it can lead to problems with reproductive development. It also has been linked in studies to brain disorders — including impaired learning — and to certain cancers, obesity and diabetes.

“We have the science now to know that certain chemical compounds, such as BPA, are unsafe,” said Lindsay Dahl, Deputy Director of the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Campaign. “Unfortunately, our federal laws haven’t kept up with the scientific findings. This is where state regulation has been coming in.”

In the winter of 2012, New Hampshire Rep. Brian Murphy (R-Rye) introduced a bill to restrict the use of BPA in the packaging of baby food and infant formula. BPA is widely used in certain plastics, in the lining of canned foods, and on cash register receipts. Manufacturers began phasing out the use of BPA in baby bottles and sippy cups in 2008, but Rep. Murphy remains concerned that some tainted products are still on the market and that infants and small children are the most vulnerable.

“Unfortunately, our federal laws haven’t kept up with the scientific findings. This is where state regulation has been coming in.”

“If there is any doubt at all [about the safety of BPA], we can and should throw a blanket over those in the highest-risk categories — infants and children,” he said. “It’s in the interest of the whole state that all children have a healthy upbringing.” Fewer learning disorders means lower health costs for all of us, he added.

Murphy, an attorney, said he learned about the dangers of BPA when his own children were young and he read the scientific evidence. However, he decided to introduce the legislation more recently, when he was approached by a constituent.

Several other states already have passed laws to reduce exposure to BPA — including Vermont and Connecticut, where the toughest restrictions are in place. Murphy worries that excess products are being dumped in New Hampshire. “Are we going to wait and be the 49th state to do something?”

Murphy’s bill encountered resistance in Concord and its fate was still unknown at the time this newsletter was published.

Opponents argued that the federal government is supposed to protect people from food and environmental hazards, rather than the states. Murphy agrees. But, he noted, “Frequently, they need this kind of instigation to make the right decisions.”

In most instances where state and local governments have taken action, parents, nurses, disabilities advocates and other ordinary people have been at the forefront of the push for change. These groups also are seeking a change in the federal law, the Toxics Substances Control Act, so that the federal government will have greater authority to restrict contaminants. (See www.saferchemicals.org)

To get involved in New Hampshire efforts, contact info@nhlda.org. □

Decreasing Chemical Exposure in our Foods

Melissa Wolfe, Board Member, NHLDA

We all know a Happy Meal isn't going to be the healthiest thing you put in your child's stomach, but sometimes parents don't have the luxury of time to lovingly prepare healthy, appealing meals. Most parents are at least aware of the dangers of trans-fats, excess sodium (one teaspoon equals 2300 mg of sodium!!), etc. These days, however, those excess fats and salts are not the only things we need to worry about.

As a child, I was always encouraged to "get a little dirty." To be too clean was to invite intolerance for germs, and the greater likelihood for illness. However, dirt on the outside of our children's bodies is one thing. Harmful carcinogens inside the intestinal tract of a five year old is quite another. Food companies, with permission from the Food and Drug Administration, are adding dangerous ingredients to our kids' food.

How does a parent discern what is edible and what is harmful? The best way is to try to only buy organic products. It's easy to recommend only buying organic, but let's face it — not everyone

Sources: See [page 14](#)

can afford to shop at Whole Foods. So, if you are like me, here are some things you can do to decrease chemical exposure.

- Invest in a good vegetable/fruit wash. Water doesn't do the trick in this case. Pay attention to the directions! A quick spray and rinse does not adequately remove pesticides. Usually you are required to spray, rub for at least thirty seconds, and then rinse thoroughly.
- Avoid canned tomatoes and other canned vegetables. Tins of vegetables have been found to contain BPA (Bisphenol A, a chemical to have estrogen-like properties). I was shopping the other day and found a box of tomatoes. The brand name is Pomi and they actually taste pretty great!
- Try to restrict those super-fake, kid-friendly cereals, snacks, and other foods that you KNOW contain additives. If it doesn't look like anything found in nature, chances are, it is artificial! Move on to something else. □

Wanna Go Green this Earth Day? There's An App For That.

Contributed by Lindsey Carmichael

It's not always easy to know how to make green choices at the grocery store; the Greening Your Family App shows you how with well researched, eco-friendly product recommendations.

Portsmouth, NH April 16, 2012 — Author Lindsey Carmichael partnered with BigForge LLC to develop the Greening Your Family app for Apple devices. The app, released by Apple on April 16th, 2012, is a road map for making eco-friendly product choices for a wide variety of food, personal care, and cleaning products. Do you wonder if you should buy organic or conventionally grown apples? Want to know which fish varieties have the least environmental contaminants? What about the safest brands of children's shampoo or toothpaste to buy? This app answers all of these questions and more.

Content in the Greening Your Family app is based on the award-winning book by the same title, written by Portsmouth, New Hampshire resident Lindsey Carmichael, MPH. In 2002, when Lindsey's young son developed asthma, she embarked on an

extensive research project that led her to receive a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of New Hampshire.

While in graduate school Lindsey's eyes were opened to the disturbing reality that many of the products we consume contain ingredients known to pose a threat to human health, particularly the health of children. Her role as a mother to a young child fueled her desire to create a resource guide that made it easy for others to identify safe food, personal care, and cleaning products. The book, published by Peter E. Randall Publisher, was released on December 1st, 2009.

Lindsey has worked in the healthcare field for 15 years and is a frequent speaker about healthy 'green' living. She lives on the New Hampshire Seacoast with her husband and son. She developed the app in an effort to make the information in her book available to a broader audience. The Greening Your Family app is available for \$0.99 from the App Store. □

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Decreasing Chemical Exposure in our Foods

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Summer Learning Losses

www.summerlearning.org

Summer Learning Losses

by Nancy N. Charron, EdD, Secretary, NHLDA

What do we know about summer vacation and learning loss? Children of all ages experience learning losses when they do not engage in reading, writing, and mathematical activities over the summer.

What Can Parents do to Promote Reading and Writing Over the Summer?

Reading and writing are connected processes. Connect writing to your child's reading experiences.

- Provide your child with a variety of reading materials. Complete a Reading Log over the summer. This can be a simple two column paper for children:

Book Title/ Author	My favorite part (this can be a picture, a sentence or several sentences depending on the developmental level of your child). For older children, this can be a paragraph/page summary.
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- Find an author that your child likes and have your child read an entire series of books written by that author. Use the 'five finger' rule; have your child read one page of his/her book aloud and hold one finger up for every unknown word. If your child counts past 'five', the book is too difficult. Read this book aloud and discuss it to increase your child's vocabulary knowledge.
 - Build reading and writing time into your summer schedule. Before bedtime or over breakfast may prove to be convenient times for some children.
 - Let your child see that you enjoy reading and writing. Read magazines and books in front of your child.
 - Talk with your child about fiction text story elements: characters, setting, problem, solution, outcome — end of book. These fiction elements are in all books, wordless books through adult books. Younger children may draw a picture of each story element. Older children may write a sentence, several sentences, or paragraphs telling about each story element. Chapter summaries can be written for chapter books including all the story elements.
 - Talk about the "features" of nonfiction books: Table of Contents, Headings, Indexes, Picture Captions, Maps, etc. Read nonfiction books out of order. Go through sections of the book reading the headings, picture captions, maps, etc. first, for better understanding. Then, go back and read the 'regular' text in the nonfiction book or article. Write, "I learned that ...". This writing can range from a word under a picture, to one sentence, to multiple sentences, or from a paragraph to a page summary.
 - Keep a "vacation" journal and have your child write in it daily.
- Check your local summer library's incentive reading programs.
 - Get your child his/her OWN library card. This simple act is greatly motivating to younger children. Your librarian can direct your child to reading books at his/her level.

Your child CAN go back to school in the fall reading , writing, and doing mathematics at the same level as when he/she left school for summer vacation!

For summer math ideas, go to www.scholastic.com/parents/activities/math

References: See [page 14](#)

FROM A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

What is a Healthy Child?

by Cheryl and Chuck Annal

We all know what a physically healthy child should look like, but what about mental health? Self-esteem is an important part of a child's mental health and this is often where a child with a learning disability struggles.

One way to bolster a child's self-esteem is to find what the child is good at outside of the academic environment. It could be sports, music, art, or acting, for example. Children need something positive in their lives that makes them feel like, "I can do this!" Our son's talent is music. He started playing the saxophone in the 4th grade. By junior high he was playing solos in the school jazz band. Today, at age 34, he still plays in a band. No matter what his grades were, he still knew that he was good at music.

Positive rewards are good for self-esteem as well. Make sure you acknowledge all your child's achievements. I know when our son saw his name on the honor roll in the newspaper, he thought, "I guess I'm smarter than I thought." Rewards don't always have to be a gift or activity. Just make sure you grab every opportunity to say, "Good job!"

As a parent, you need to ensure that your child is physically and emotionally healthy — a tough job especially when your child has special needs. But the reward is an adult who can stand on his/her own and eventually say, "Thanks Mom and Dad for always being there for me." □

PARENTS AS PARTNERS:

Resources For You

By Beverly W. Boggess, Ph.D. 2011-12 President

Shirley Hiltz-Adams, State Affiliate Coach of LDA of America recommends several resources for parents. Various sample letters are available in the Advocacy Manual at the LDA website, www.ldaamerica.org and through the National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth (NICHCY), nichcy.org. NICHCY is now called the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. It is considered the premier national information resource for information of disabilities and special education for children and youth from birth through age 21 through grant funds from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education.

The NICHCY website has almost 100 documents in English on a broad range of topics, including sample letters for parents to personalize to fit their situation and send to their local school district, refer to *Communicating with Your Child's School Through Letter Writing*, at nichcy.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/pa9.pdf. The letters and many other documents are also available in Spanish at nichcy.org/espanol/publicaciones/temas-english. If you have Spanish language parents with literacy issues, NICHCY has bilingual research and information specialists at 1-800-695-0285 who can be of help. Following is a list of sample resources available:

Start, Student Records, Follow-up Issues 1-4, with Sample Letters

1. Discuss a problem
2. Request a copy of your child's records
3. Write a follow-up letter
4. Give positive feedback

Evaluation, IEPs, Placement Issues 5-9, with Sample Letters

5. Request an evaluation for special education services
6. Request an independent evaluation
7. Request a meeting to review your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)

8. Request that your child's placement be changed

9. Let the school know that you intend to place your child in a private school at public expense

Invoke Safeguards to Resolve Disputes, Issues 10-13, with Sample Letters

10. Request that the school give you notice of its intended actions or refusal to take an action (called "prior written notice")
11. Request mediation when you and the school don't agree
12. Request a due process hearing when you and the school don't agree
13. File a complaint with the State

Benefits Of Membership In LDA Of America

LDA is the voice for people with learning disabilities of all ages and their families; the leading advocate for laws and policies that create opportunities for people with learning disabilities; a leader in promoting research into the nature and causes of learning disabilities.

LDA offers cutting edge information on learning disabilities, practical solutions and a comprehensive network of resources to support people with learning disabilities, their families, teachers and other professionals.

LDA Membership offers:

1. Support through groups and workshops
2. Advocacy through assistance, training and information
3. Information via a toll-free call-in line 888-3000-6710
4. Resources on the LDA website (www.ldaamerica.org) for parents, teachers, professionals, adults and those new to learning disabilities
5. Exclusive members area on our comprehensive website
6. News briefings of the week's top stories on learning disabilities and related topics via THE LD SOURCE, a free, "opt-in" email resource
7. News from Washington monthly reports on legislative issues via News-in-Brief
8. Discounts on registration for state and national LDA conferences and workshops
9. Discount subscription to Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal, a peer-reviewed journal published three times a year
10. Access to Professional Liability, General Liability and other coverage at a reduced rate for members in private practice.

Together We Can Make a Difference. Become a part of Something Greater!

LDA:

1. **Unites** individuals, families and professionals who have a shared commitment to individuals with learning disabilities
2. **Raises** awareness about learning disabilities among policymakers and the public at large
3. **Advocates** to preserve, enhance and expand access to services for children and adults with learning disabilities
4. **Represents** the needs and interests of children and adults with learning disabilities to regulatory and policy-making entities
5. **Creates** and **distributes** policy and position statements and public testimony on various aspects of policies that impact the lives of children and adults with learning disabilities
6. **Develops** Action Alerts on crucial national legislation
7. **Collaborates** with professional and advocacy organizations on public policy on a national level.

Note: LDA never shares or sells membership information.

Join Us!

The NH Learning Disabilities Association is a private, non-profit, volunteer organization of parents and professionals dedicated to promoting better understanding, education and services for individuals with learning disabilities.

NHLDA is the State affiliate of LDA of America, Inc. A grassroots organization, NHLDA provides programs, practical information and support for parents, professionals and individuals with learning disabilities.

Send check or money order, payable to NHLDA, to the address below. Or join online by credit card at www.ldaamerica.org