

Selling Safer Products for Early Care and Education



May 2017



Acknowledgements

This report was written and researched by Clean and Healthy New York. It was made possible by the support of the John Merck Fund, Marisla Foundation, New York Community Trust, and Park Foundation.

Thank you to Joshua Bernheimer, Olivia Harvey, Stavroula Katsios, and Anouk Nouet, for research support, and to Gretchen Lee Salter from Safer States for review. Thank you to Jeffrey K. Davis, Esq. for legal review.

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Disclaimer

When researching this report, we made our best effort to get information from companies about their chemicals policies and their public disclosures. We reviewed websites, used common search terms, and spot-checked certain product categories, particularly furniture, food service items, toys, and art supplies. It is possible that companies which did not reply to our survey have chemical policies for products they sell, or that they screen out specific chemicals or chemical categories. This report represents a good faith effort to assess the sector in the spring of 2017. We did not include cleaning products, as these are sold at a wide variety of stores, nor did we include certifications or evaluations of environmental criteria that do not pertain to chemical composition of products, such as forestry, recycled content, or energy efficiency.

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Foreword

You have probably heard the expression “children are like sponges”. Maybe you used it because a child overheard and repeated something that you didn’t want them to. You didn’t mean it in the literal sense. However, science supports this claim!

The early years are a time of rapid growth and development so it is especially important to nurture and protect children during this phase of their life. Children’s brains and the cells that connect the messaging they send are developing by the second. According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, more than 1 million new neural connections occur per second in the first few years of life. Children’s bodies are smaller so when they are exposed to something harmful the impact they experience is amplified. Because we care for our children we limit the amount of sugar they consume and do not give them caffeine because their bodies cannot process it. Similarly, we need to reduce their exposure to harmful chemicals.

For these reasons, the environment where children spend a significant amount of time while their parents work matters a great deal. Nationally, children spend an average of 36 hours in child care arrangements. The overwhelming majority of families use child care or afterschool programs for their children. Busy, working parents rely on their care arrangements to provide a safe and educational setting. The classrooms and toys that children are exposed to on a regular basis must be free of toxins and foster the best environment for children to grow and thrive.

We applaud those companies, such as Community Playthings, that have taken the steps to make sure they are selling the safest products for our youngest children. We implore others to do better.

Jessica Klos Shapiro
Director of Policy and Community Education
Early Care & Learning Council

Executive Summary

More than 60% of American children spend time in child care programs during their earliest years, when rapid development and exploratory behaviors make them particularly vulnerable to certain chemicals in their environment. There is a broad set of chemicals that can disrupt healthy development, resulting in lifelong increases in cancer risk, decreased fertility, asthma, obesity, or learning and developmental disorders. Chemicals of concern include flame retardants, antimicrobials, bisphenols (like BPA) and phthalates, heavy metals, stain- and water-proofers, and vinyl (PVC).

In this report, we evaluated retailer policies on chemicals in products they sell, looking for both broad policies for all products, as well as specific efforts to offer products made without harmful chemicals. We also assessed how consumers can access this information. In this review, we used certifications to identify chemically safer products.

While nearly all (22 of 24) retailers use certifications to identify chemically-safer products, only one company applies a broad chemicals policy to all products it sells: Community Playthings. Another leader, Kaplan Early Learning, offered the most types of certifications in products they sell. On the other end of the spectrum, only for Creative Children were we unable to find any information about chemicals in products or relevant certifications. All of the rest reference at least one environmental or health benefit in some product descriptions.

We urge all early care and learning retailers to: 1) create and implement a policy for screening out chemicals that can harm children's healthy development; 2) establish a timeline for implementation; 3) make the policy and the timeline public; and 4) establish and implement a clear and consistent method for consumers to identify less toxic products.



Background

This report is part of a broad, sustained effort to improve human health and protect communities, wildlife and the environment by eliminating the harm certain chemicals can cause by disrupting normal growth and development or contributing to diseases and disorders. Scientific research tells us that there are “critical windows of development” when people are particularly vulnerable to chemicals. At those times, even very small amounts can change the way hormones communicate between cells, resulting in lifelong changes.

A particularly critical window, unsurprisingly, is from the point of conception until a toddler’s third birthday. This is also the time when a baby’s diet and environment matter a lot, too, which is why organizations like For Our Babies, First Thousand Days, and Zero to Three focus on ensuring quality care, healthy nutrition, bonding with care givers, and more. Eliminating harmful chemicals in everyday products is a critical aspect of ensuring all babies can grow to meet their full potential.

Why early care and education programs?

Child care settings are tailored specifically to infants and toddlers. Nearly eleven million American children are in paid child care settings, spending an average of 36 hours each week - a major part of young children's lives and wakeful exploration of the world. Child care providers face substantial regulations regarding the physical safety of their facilities. However, due to inadequate or nonexistent limits on harmful chemicals in consumer products, child care programs can expose children to harmful chemicals. Providers do not intend to expose children to these chemicals, but can do so unknowingly when making purchasing decisions because they lack information.

Many products that babies and toddlers encounter are made especially for child care settings, and are purchased from retailers that market directly to child care providers and to other early care and learning programs. These retailers can play a meaningful role in going beyond regulatory requirements to screen out potential health hazards.

Which chemicals?

There are over a thousand chemicals that can affect children's health and development, alter hormones, contribute to cancer, obesity, learning and developmental disabilities or reproductive harm, or cause and trigger asthma¹.

Oregon, Washington State and Vermont require children's product makers to report the presence of over sixty chemicals in items they make. The following harmful chemicals are in products made for child care settings.

Antimicrobials. Chemicals used to limit bacterial growth have become all-too-common in children's products, such as toddler gym socks, children's lunch boxes, infant changing pads, and toys. Some of these, including triclosan, have been restricted in cleansers by the Food and Drug Administration, due to concern about hormone disruption and other potential health impacts, as well as its contribution to treatment-resistant bacteria.ⁱⁱ Antimicrobials are also marketed in proprietary blends such as Microban, Biofresh, and Ultrafresh. There is no evidence that adding antimicrobial chemicals to things like carpets, cutting boards, and wall paint prevent transmission of disease. They instead are added to protect the product itself.ⁱⁱⁱ When it comes to cleaners, studies show washing hands with plain soap and water is just as effective at killing germs that contribute to the spread of disease.

Bisphenols. The mostly widely-known of these is bisphenol A, (BPA) used as the building block for polycarbonate (hard, usually clear) plastic and the flexible linings of canned foods. BPA is no longer used in baby bottles or sippy cups, but is still in widespread use elsewhere. It can act like estrogen, contributing to prostate and breast cancer, reproductive problems, diabetes, and obesity. Similar chemicals, such as bisphenol S (BPS, sometimes used in replacement plastics in baby bottles) and bisphenol AF (BPAF) are at least as potent hormone disruptors as the BPA they replaced, which is why scientists and advocates now call for avoiding all bisphenols, not just one chemical in the class.^{iv}

Flame Retardants. The term "flame retardants" includes a wide range of chemicals that are added to or used to coat plastic, polyurethane foam, and cloth in furniture, draperies and carpeting with the stated aim of slowing the spread of a fire. For many child care articles, including crib mattresses, changing pads, nap mats, padded blocks,

tumble mats, and foam books, there is no evidence that these chemical additives actually play a meaningful role in fire safety. In most of these cases, no flammability standard applies any more. Instead, they are significant source of chemicals that can cause cancer, learning and developmental disabilities, and infertility.

Heavy Metals. Arsenic, antimony, cadmium, lead, and mercury are among the toxic heavy metals present in children's products. They are capable of harming children's health at very low levels. Health impacts include multiple organ damage, changes in DNA, and cancer. Heavy metals are in toys, jewelry making kits, vinyl, certain face paint and other art supplies, and numerous other children's products.

Stain and waterproofers. Most stain, water, and greaseproof materials are treated with PFASs – poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances. The most notorious chemicals are PFOA and PFOS in Teflon and GoreTex. They are being phased out because they don't break down easily in the environment, build up in our bodies over time, and can cause health problems. These health problems include kidney and testicular cancer, higher cholesterol levels, suppressed immune systems, and decreased benefit from vaccinations.^v They are being replaced with alternatives, which have not been shown to be safer. PFASs can still be present in common early care and learning products such as stainproof carpets, waterproof children's rain gear, disposable paper plates and bowls, soft furnishings and nonstick cookware.

Vinyl, (Polyvinyl chloride, or PVC), is made from cancer-causing vinyl chloride,^{vi} and requires a variety of often-toxic additives, such as lead and phthalates, to stabilize the vinyl, make it flexible or hard, resist UV light, and more. Phthalates (pronounced THAL-ates) disrupt hormones, cause new asthma cases and trigger attacks,^{vii} and heavy metals can lower IQ, damage organs, and pose other threats.^{viii} PVC is used

throughout child care settings in numerous children's products including inflatable toys, nap mats, dolls, and clothing, as well as child care setting products such as wallpaper and flooring.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are a group of chemicals that easily become gases and can move from products into the air. They are used in adhesives in plywood or pressed wood furniture, paints, and permanent markers. Two VOCs, benzene and formaldehyde, are considered human carcinogens, and others are anticipated to be so. Short-term exposures can lead to eye and respiratory irritation, headaches, dizziness, tiredness, and nausea. Long term exposures can damage the liver, kidneys and central nervous system.^{ix}

Chemical(s) of concern	Primary health concerns	Presence in child care settings
Antimicrobials	Hormone disruption, promotion of resistant bacteria, allergies	Carpets, hard surfaces, cleaning products, cutting boards,
Bisphenols	Cancer, infertility, obesity, diabetes	Food service items, food and beverage can linings, other rigid plastics, receipt paper
Flame Retardants	Cancer, infertility, learning and developmental disabilities,	Nap and play mats, pads, foam blocks, electronics
Heavy metals	Learning and developmental disabilities, organ damage, cancer.	Toys, jewelry-making kits, certain face paints and other art supplies
Stain and waterproofers	Cancer, cholesterol, compromised immune systems	Carpet, non-stick cookware, soft furnishings
Vinyl (polyvinyl chloride)	Toxic additives can disrupt hormones, lower IQ, affect fertility, cause asthma	Flooring, wallpaper, dolls/action figures, mats (both play and nap), padded blocks
Volatile Organic Compounds	Respiratory illness and irritation including asthma	Flooring, furniture, pressed wood products



About Retailers

We surveyed 24 companies that market directly to child care providers and the broader early care and education community. Because of the distributed nature of child care programs, these companies use either online stores, catalogs, or both to reach providers. The largest of these retailers attend, host booths, and sponsor early care and education conferences. They supply materials that are not easily found at broadly consumer oriented stores, including child-sized furniture, dramatic play items, texture tables, and nap mats. Details about the retailers can be found in Appendix 1. A sample of the letter sent to retailers can be found in Appendix 2.

Our Survey

We sent letters to the 24 retail outlets, asking them the following questions:

- 1) Do you have a policy to address harmful chemicals?
- 2) Do you carry products that go above and beyond regulations to be less toxic?
- 3) How do you let your customers know about these products?
- 4) What, if any, certifications back up your environmental claims?

Our online survey, a link to which was included in our letter, specifically asked about chemicals the company avoided: flame retardants, bisphenols, triclosan, perfluorinated compounds, phthalates, and heavy metals. We reviewed catalogs and websites as though we were consumers ourselves. We also manually searched for and used search bars (entering terms like “certification” and “certified” as well as “greenguard” and “AP”) to identify which certifications were used to verify claims. We constrained our review to retailers who directly and specifically target the early care and education community, and to products designed specifically for that community. Therefore we did not evaluate cleaning products, office furniture, or printed educational materials.

What we found

Our research revealed a range of actions regarding chemicals in products. The good news is that 22 of the 24 companies we surveyed offered products labeled as meeting at least one third-party chemical-related certification beyond regulatory requirements, primarily GreenGuard, GreenGuard Gold, and AP. However, the number of products meeting these and other certifications varied widely.

Most companies offered some products labeled as “BPA-free” while also offering polycarbonate products (which are made from, and have been shown to leach, BPA). We assessed use of indications such as “BPA-free,” “PVC-free,” “phthalate-free,” “heavy metal-free” and found that while a number of companies occasionally indicate this, the information was not consistently applied to all products, and there was no explanation of how these assertions were verified. Therefore, we have not included information about these listings for specific companies.

Only one company in our survey has a comprehensive chemicals policy: **Community Playthings**. They both manufacture and sell their products, and their chemicals policy that covers all products they sell. Over the last decade, Community Playthings has eliminated all BPA (polycarbonates, epoxies), PVC (vinyl/phthalates), styrene (including EPS foam packaging), acrylonitrile, butadiene, antimony based colorants, most perfluorinated fabric treatments (PFCs), flame retardant additives in bedding products, and more from their product line. Their California Technical Bulletin-117 2013 (also called TB-117 2013) compliant upholstered furniture, nap mats, and crib mattresses are free of added flame retardant chemicals. Products are certified to Indoor Advantage Gold level by SCS Global Services. Community Playthings is also working to reduce perfluorinated (PFAS) stain release treatments in carpets, and PFASs and flame retardants in their California TB-133 compliant upholstered furniture products. When flame retardants are required, they do not use any halogenated flame retardants. A brief discussion of their standard is available on their website and in their catalogs.

Kids Advance Montessori has a chemicals policy that is more limited, but they reported to us that they do not sell products containing flame retardants. They are the only other company that explicitly reported avoiding a class of chemicals for all

products they sell. In addition, they produce solid wood products and use water-based paints. They post online results of their product testing for heavy metals.

Kaplan Early Learning presented eight different certifications on their website (see chart below) but did not have a company-wide policy on screening out harmful chemicals. The company stated, "We strive to include detailed product information, and this is where information regarding 'green' or 'natural' qualities is provided. Customers can easily identify these products by searching our website and catalogues, or contacting a member of our Total Care Team. We recognize the value in these products and add them to our offerings when possible if they also meet our standards for quality, value, and educational purposes."

Constructive Playthings offers a "Greenscape collection" which it describes as "earth-friendly materials used in construction combined with LEED™ Certified manufacturing standards. Achieves LEED™ credits; "Green Cross Certified" 100% recycled and recovered wood; lifetime guarantee against defects in material or workmanship; Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) Free; low formaldehyde emissions; water-based inks; NO Lead used in Manufacturing; 100% recycled packaging." However, it does not offer a certification for the formaldehyde levels, as does GreenGuard, GreenGuard Gold or Indoor Advantage Gold.

Only one company, **Creative Children**, did not provide any information about certifications in their materials or include information about any chemical composition in their product descriptions.

Summary of responses from retailers

Company Name	Replied to survey	Chemicals policy beyond regulations	Names of certifications provided
Achievement Products for Special Needs	.	.	AP
Angeles Corporation	.	.	GreenGuard Gold
Becker's School Supplies	.	.	GreenGuard Children and Schools/Gold, organic, AP
Kindermart Kids (formerly Child Care Catalog)	.	.	GreenGuard, GreenGuard Gold, CRI Green Label Plus
Child Care Depot	Yes	.	GreenGuard
School Specialty	.	.	GreenGuard, AP
Childcare Supply Company	.	.	GreenGuard
Community Playthings	Yes	Yes	Indoor Advantage Gold by SCS Global Services
Constructive Playthings	.	.	AP, Cradle to Cradle, CRI Green Label Plus
Creative Children	.	.	None given
Daycare Furniture Direct	.	.	GreenGuard Gold
Daycare Mall	.	.	Green Guard
Discount School Supply	.	.	AP, GreenGuard Gold, GreenGuard
Early Childhood Manufacturers' Direct	.	.	GreenGuard
Environments	.	.	GreenGuard Gold
Furniture-4kids.com	.	.	GreenGuard
Honor Roll Childcare Supply	.	.	AP, GreenGuard Gold, MAS, CRI Green Label Plus
Kaplan Early Learning	Yes	.	GreenGuard, GreenGuard Gold, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, AP, Organic, CRI Green Label Plus, Cradle to Cradle, RoHS compliant electronics.
Kid Advance Montessori	Yes	Yes	None given
Lakeshore	Yes	.	GreenGuard
PureFUN! Supply	.	.	AP, GreenGuard
Really Good Stuff, Inc.	.	.	Greenguard Gold, products are labeled flame retardant-free, PVC-free
School Outfitters	.	.	AP, GreenGuard
Strictly for Kids	.	.	CRI Green Label Plus, GreenGuard Gold



What certifications mean

Product certification is the process of certifying that a certain product has passed performance and quality assurance tests, and meets certain qualification criteria. In the search for nontoxic children's products, there are a variety of product certifications, each of which has its own voluntary standards and definitions of what is acceptable. Certifications can provide helpful guidance for early care and education providers who prioritize children's environmental health. But not all certifications are created equally. Here is a description of three main types, which will shed some light on which certifications are the most stringent.

First-party certifications are made by companies themselves. These self-certifications tend to be designed to fit a product, rather than the other way around. Second-party certifications are made by trade associations. These also tend to be designed to ensure eligibility of existing products or to certify compliance with existing laws. Third-party certifications are developed and run by non-profit organizations or government bodies with no financial stake in the outcome. In general, third-party certifications are the most health protective and address the broadest range of concerns. They tend to evolve over time along with the trend

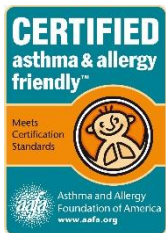
toward safer products. Independent third-party certification means that an independent organization has reviewed the manufacturing process of a product and has independently determined that the final product complies.

The following certifications relate to chemicals in products that retailers in this report surveyed.



The AP (Approved Product) Seal identifies art materials that are safe and that are certified to contain no materials in sufficient quantities to be toxic or injurious to humans, including children, or to cause acute or chronic health problems. ACMI's toxicology team is located at Duke University's Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

www.acmiart.org



Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America - tests household products against proprietary standards to verify claims that products do not contain allergenic or irritating materials, including toys.

www.aafa.org/page/certified-asthma-allergy-friendly.aspx



Cradle to Cradle - acknowledges continuous improvement and innovation of products and processes towards the goal of being not just "less bad" but also "more good" for people and the planet.

www.mcdonough.com/organizations/cradle-cradle-products-innovation-institute/



Organic certification run by the US Food and Drug Administration covers the products of farming, not finished textile products like bedding. It certifies that certain synthetic pesticides and fertilizers were not used in farming. Certified organic textiles are covered by Oeko-Tex and GOTS, neither of which were identified by the retailers in this survey.



Green Label Plus tests carpet, adhesives and cushion to help providers identify products with very low emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Green Label Plus products are tested and certified by an independent laboratory. This is a trade association label - a "second party" certification.

www.carpet-rug.org/green-label-plus.html



GreenGuard –This program, run by Underwriter’s Laboratory (UL), certifies interior products and materials that have low chemical emissions, improving the indoor air quality. All certified products must meet emissions standards based on established chemical exposure criteria.

greenguard.org/en/about.aspx



GreenGuard Gold (formerly and still sometimes listed as “Children and Schools”) This UL standard includes health based criteria for additional chemicals and requires a total VOC emission level ten times lower than that of GreenGuard standard to ensure that products are acceptable for use in environments such as schools and healthcare facilities.

greenguard.org/en/Certification

[Programs/CertificationPrograms_childrenSchools.aspx](http://greenguard.org/en/CertificationPrograms_childrenSchools.aspx)



Indoor Advantage Gold by SCS Global Services sets standards for emission rates of each chemical on the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) Chronic Reference Exposure Levels (CRELs) list as well as for any chemical listed as a probable or known carcinogen or as a reproductive toxicant.

www.scs-certified.com/gbc/indooradvantage.php



The **Materials Analytical Services’ “green leaf”** mark allows consumers to identify interior construction products, furniture and furnishings which are designed and manufactured to lower chemical emissions released into the indoor environment. www.mas-certifiedgreen.com/about-us



Solutions

What retailers should do

Companies that sell products directly to early care and education providers should do the following:

1. Create and implement a policy for screening out chemicals that can harm children's healthy development, including a Restricted Substances List
2. Establish a timeline for implementation
3. Make the policy, Restricted Substances List and timeline available to the public.
4. Establish a clear and consistent way to identify products that are less toxic and require their vendors to verify these claims.

Major retailers including Target, Walmart, CVS, Bed Bath and Beyond and buybuy BABY have Restricted Substances Lists to direct vendors on materials selection.

What manufacturers should do

Manufacturers should implement the Principles for Safer Chemicals, developed by the Business NGO Workgroup for Safer Chemicals and Sustainable Materials. More information, including current endorsing companies and how to endorse the principles, is available here: www.bizngo.org/safer-chemicals/principles-for-safer-chemicals

Principles for Safer Chemicals

Creating Healthy Solutions for the Environment, People and the Economy

Demand for products made from greener chemicals is growing rapidly.

Consumers, investors and governments want chemicals that have low to no toxicity and degrade into innocuous substances in the environment.^x Leading businesses are seeking to capture these emerging market opportunities by redesigning their products and catalyzing change in their supply chains.

To advance an economy where the production and use of chemicals are healthy for humans, as well as for our global environment and its non-human inhabitants, responsible companies and their supply chains should adopt and implement the following four guiding principles for chemicals policy:

- ❖ **Know and disclose product chemistry.** Manufacturers will identify the substances associated with and used in a product across its lifecycle and will increase as appropriate the transparency of the chemical constituents in their products, including the public disclosure of chemicals of high concern. Buyers will request product chemistry data from their suppliers.

- ❖ **Assess and avoid hazards.** Manufacturers will determine the hazard characteristics of chemical constituents and formulations in their products, use chemicals with inherently low hazard potential, prioritize chemicals of high concern^{xi} for elimination, minimize exposure when hazards cannot be prevented, and redesign products and processes to avoid the use and/or generation of hazardous chemicals. Buyers will work with their suppliers to achieve this principle.
- ❖ **Commit to continuous improvement.** Establish corporate governance structures, policies and practices that create a framework for the regular review of product and process chemistry, and that promote the use of chemicals, processes, and products with inherently lower hazard potential.
- ❖ **Support public policies and industry standards.** Advance the implementation of the above three principles, ensure that comprehensive hazard data are available for chemicals on the market, take action to eliminate or reduce known hazards and promote a greener economy, including support for green chemistry research and education.

These principles are key features of an effective strategy for promoting, developing and using chemicals that are environmentally preferable across their entire lifecycle.

Actions by early care and education

When evaluating products for purchase, early care and education providers should look for retailers that are screening out harmful chemicals. They should ask retailers to identify products that do not contain the chemicals discussed in this report. They should also encourage their favorite retailers to adopt a chemicals management policy and increase transparency about chemicals of concern in products.

ECE programs should also consider ways to demonstrate their leadership on environmental health matters, by looking at endorsement programs such as the Eco-Healthy Child Care program run by Children's Environmental Health Network. Finally, we recommend that they pay attention to new environmental requirements being incorporated in to accreditations offered by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and others.





The science on chemicals of concern



Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health conducts community-based research in the United States and overseas to study the health effects of prenatal and early postnatal exposures to common urban pollutants, with the aim of preventing environmentally related disease in children. ccceh.org



Environmental Health News is an independent, foundation-funded news organization that reports, publishes and contextualizes news stories on environmental topics.

www.environmentalhealthnews.org/toxification/



Green Science Policy Institute consists primarily of Ph.D. scientists who specialize in the publication and communication of peer-reviewed research. It collaborates with leading scientists on policy-relevant research projects and translates scientific information to educate key decision makers, the press, and the public. greensciencepolicy.org



Silent Spring Institute is staffed and led by researchers dedicated to science that serves the public interest. They partner with physicians, public health and community advocates and other scientists to identify and break the links between environmental chemicals and women's health, especially breast cancer. silentspring.org

Child care settings



Child Care Aware® of America works with more than 400 state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies nationwide. Child Care Aware® of America's vision is that every family in the United States has access to a high quality, affordable child care system. The child care system supports children's growth, development and educational advancement and creates positive economic impact for families and communities. childcareaware.org/about/child-care-aware-of-america/

Resources for retailers and manufacturers



The **Green Chemistry & Commerce Council (GC3)** is a cross sectoral, business-to-business network of companies and other organizations working collaboratively to accelerate green chemistry across sectors and supply chains.

www.greenchemistryandcommerce.org



BizNGO is a unique collaboration of business and environmental leaders who are advancing safer chemicals and sustainable materials, thereby creating market transitions to a healthy economy, healthy environment, and healthy people. www.bizngo.org



The mission of the **Chemical Footprint Project** is to transform global chemical use by measuring and disclosing data on business progress to safer chemicals. It provides a tool for benchmarking companies as they select safer alternatives and reduce their use of chemicals of high concern. It is a project of Clean Production Action. www.chemicalfootprint.org



MADE SAFE is America's first nontoxic seal for products we use every day, from baby to personal care to household and beyond. We certify that products you use on your body, with your family, and in your home are made with safe ingredients not known or suspected to harm human health. www.madesafe.org

Campaigns to protect children from toxics



Getting Ready for Baby – a national campaign of over seventy organizations advocating for retailers of products for babies and children to sell only products free from harmful chemicals. www.gettingready4baby.org



Children's Environmental Health Network – a national multi-disciplinary organization whose mission is to protect the developing child from environmental health hazards and promote a healthier environment. www.cehn.org



Healthy Babies Bright Futures – an alliance of scientists, nonprofit organizations and donors working to create and support initiatives that measurably reduce exposures to neurotoxic chemicals in the first thousand days of development, inspired and supported by science and data. www.hbbf.org



Safer States – a network of diverse environmental health coalitions and organizations in states around the country that share a bold and urgent vision for families, communities, and the environment to be protected from the devastating impacts of our society's heavy use of chemicals. www.saferstates.org



Mind the Store – is the market campaign of Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, aimed at moving the nation's top retailers to sell only products without harmful chemicals. saferchemicals.org/mind-the-store/



EcoHealthy Child Care is a national program that partners with child care professionals to eliminate or reduce environmental health hazards found within or around child care facilities. cehn.org/our-work/eco-healthy-child-care/

Appendix 1: Retailers

Company Name	Parent Company	Website	Replied to survey	Has policy beyond regulations	Offer safer product	Certifications provided
Achievement Products for Special Needs	Excelligence	www.achievement-products.com			✓	AP
Angeles Corporation	Excelligence	www.angelesstore.com			✓	GreenGuard Gold
Becker's School Supplies		www.shopbecker.com			✓	AP, GreenGuard Children and Schools/Gold, Organic
Child Care Depot		www.childcaredepot.com	✓		✓	GreenGuard
Childcare Supply Company	Gloves Unlimited	www.childcaresupplycompany.com			✓	GreenGuard
Community Playthings		www.communityplaythings.com	✓	✓	✓	Indoor Advantage Gold by SCS Global Services
Constructive Playthings	US Toy	www.constructiveplaythings.com			✓	AP, Cradle to Cradle, CRI Green Label Plus, LEED
Creative Children		www.creativechildreneducational.com				
Daycare Furniture Direct	Joco	www.daycarefurnituredirect.com			✓	GreenGuard Gold,
Daycare Mall		www.daycaremall.com			✓	Green Guard
Discount School Supply	Excelligence	www.discountschools Supply.com			✓	AP, GreenGuard Gold, GreenGuard
Early Childhood Manufacturers' Direct		www.ecmdstore.com			✓	GreenGuard
Environments	Excelligence	www.environments.com			✓	GreenGuard Gold
Furniture-4kids.com	OFS Brands	www.furniture-4kids.com			✓	GreenGuard
Honor Roll Childcare Supply		www.honorrollsupply.com			✓	AP, GreenGuard Gold, MAS, CRI Green Label Plus
Kaplan Early Learning		www.kaplanco.com	✓		✓	AP, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, CRI Green Label Plus, Cradle to Cradle, GreenGuard, GreenGuard Gold, Organic, RoHS compliant electronics
Kid Advance Montessori		www.kidadvance.com	✓	✓	✓	
Kindermart Kids (formerly Child Care Catalog)	Brent Point LLC	kindermarkkids.com			✓	CRI Green Label Plus GreenGuard, GreenGuard Gold,
Lakeshore		www.lakeshorelearning.com	✓		✓	GreenGuard
PureFUN! Supply		www.purefunsupply.com			✓	AP, GreenGuard
Really Good Stuff, Inc.	Excelligence	www.reallygoodstuff.com	.	.	✓	Greenguard Gold, some products are labeled flame retardant-free
School Outfitters		www.schooloutfitters.com	.	.	✓	AP, GreenGuard
School Specialty		www.schoolspecialty.com	.	.	✓	GreenGuard, AP
Strictly for Kids		www.strictlyforkidsstore.com	.	.	✓	CRI Green Label Plus, GreenGuard Gold

Appendix 2: Sample letter

Dear _____,

On behalf of the Getting Ready for Baby coalition (www.gettingready4baby.org), we are writing to learn more about _____' policies and practices regarding chemicals in products you sell. Getting Ready for Baby (GRfB) includes over 70 organizations working to protect children's health from toxic chemicals. We do this by engaging retailers to adopt policies that require product makers to know and disclose the chemicals and materials they use, and to phase out harmful chemicals. As leading retailers for early child care and learning programs, you have the power to protect those to whom you market products: infants and young children.

Too many products made for children contain toxic chemicals. These chemicals can negatively affect children's health, including contributing to neurodevelopmental problems, cancer, obesity, diabetes, asthma, and reproductive problems later in life.¹ The Targeting Environmental Neuro-Developmental Risks (TENDR) consensus statement finds that children in the United States today are at an "unacceptably high risk of developing neurodevelopmental disorders that affect the brain and nervous system." This statement was endorsed by over 40 scientists, health professionals and providers, as well as children's health and disabilities advocates.

To reduce the incidence of health problems from harmful chemicals, our coalition is calling for retailers to use their purchasing power to provide only products made without harmful chemicals. In sector after sector, companies have responded to this consumer demand and to the growing number of government regulations by establishing Restricted Substances Lists, and by working with their vendors to reformulate products to avoid problem chemicals.

One example of a retailer making numerous advances is buybuyBABY. They and their parent company, Bed Bath and Beyond, have established a Restricted Substances List, phased out sale of products containing any of seven toxic flame retardant chemicals, phased out phthalates beyond regulatory requirements in their private label formulated products, and worked in-depth with crib mattress manufacturers to remove all flame retardant chemicals from these products. They make information available about the meeting of flammability standards (and use of chemicals to do so) in product descriptions of crib mattresses and other items on their website.

Major retailers have been assessed on their actions on chemicals, with the top retailers getting grades ranging from B to failing.² As a retailer that markets directly to early care and learning programs, the items you sell are used daily by babies and children from birth to three years of age. Our coalition is

¹ See numerous recently released consensus statements, including:

- the Targeting Environmental Neuro-Developmental Risks (TENDR) Consensus Statement: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/ehp358/>
- Collaborative on Health and the Environment consensus statement: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/about/consensus>
- San Antonio Statement on Brominated and Chlorinated Flame Retardants: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3002202/>
- The Madrid Statement on Poly- and Perfluoroalkyl Substances: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/1509934/>
- Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals: An Endocrine Society Scientific Statement: <http://press.endocrine.org/doi/full/10.1210/er.2009-0002>

² "Who's Minding the Store" report released in November 2016. <http://saferchemicals.org/retailer-report-card/>

conducting research into your company and that of your competitors, to understand how actively such retailers are ensuring products they sell are free from harmful chemicals and how transparently information about the materials used in products is made available to the consumer. We will prepare a report on our findings to share with the public, child care programs and early education programs, so consumers know how to find the safest products.

Please respond to this letter with answers to the following questions. For your ease of response, we have created a form to fill out online here:

<https://docs.google.com/a/cleanhealthyny.org/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSflo4QEK8QOoHxocF1E6SY9SyquAyErhJ58VkSnoUX9d6QyLw/viewform?c=0&w=1>

1. Does _____ have a corporate policy related to toxic chemicals? If so, please provide the specific language. If you are preparing or implementing such a policy, please provide a timeline for its implementation.
2. Which specific chemicals, if any, have you already eliminated from your products? If yes, please list the toxics that are screened from your products. If you are preparing or implementing such a policy, please provide a timeline for its implementation.
3. Please describe how _____ makes information on the materials and chemicals in products your company sells available to shoppers in your catalogs and online.
4. Does _____ offer a line or lines of products presented as less toxic, "natural" or "green"? If so, please provide the criteria used to evaluate them, and the extent of those offerings.
5. Please describe how you inform the public about your chemical policy, if any, or safer product offerings (in product description, in section of catalog, etc.).

Please respond to Bobbi Wilding, Deputy Director at Clean and Healthy New York, via email (bobbi@cleanhealthyny.org), phone (518-641-1552 x3), or by filling out the online form (<https://docs.google.com/a/cleanhealthyny.org/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSflo4QEK8QOoHxocF1E6SY9SyquAyErhJ58VkSnoUX9d6QyLw/viewform?c=0&w=1>) by February 15th. We will indicate in our report to consumers if a retailer failed to respond, and in the absence of your response will provide our own evaluation of information presented by retailers in their catalogs and on their websites.

Sincerely,



Bobbi Wilding
Deputy Director, Clean and Healthy New York
Campaign Coordinator, Getting Ready for Baby

References

ⁱ A number of government agencies track chemicals of concern to human health, including California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, for regulation under Proposition 65. This list alone includes over 900 chemicals: <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/chemicals>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.fda.gov/newsevents/newsroom/pressannouncements/ucm517478.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ "Healthy Environments: Understanding Antimicrobial Ingredients in Building Materials" by Healthy Building Network and Perkins+Will, published in March 2017. In the Executive Summary, the authors write, "No evidence yet exists to demonstrate that products intended for use in interior spaces that incorporate antimicrobial additives actually result in healthier populations. Further, antimicrobials may have negative impacts on both people and the environment."
perkinswill.com/sites/default/files/Antimicrobial_WhitePaper_PerkinsWill.pdf

^{iv} Johanna R. Rochester and Ashley L. Bolden. "Bisphenol S and F: A Systematic Review and Comparison of the Hormonal Activity of Bisphenol A Substitutes" *Environmental Health Perspectives*, July 2015

<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/1408989/>

^v <https://www.epa.gov/chemical-research/research-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>

^{vi} <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/substances/vinyl-chloride>

^{vii} <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2014/sep/17/health-asthma-plastic-pregnancy-children-home-phthalates>

^{viii} <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14757716>

^{ix} https://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text_version/chemicals.php?id=31

^x These are two of the 12 Principles of Green Chemistry defined by Paul Anastas and John Warner in: *Green Chemistry: Theory and Practice*, 1999 (Oxford University Press: New York).

^{xi} "Chemicals of high concern" include substances that have the following properties: 1) persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT); 2) very persistent and very bioaccumulative (vPvB); 3) very persistent and toxic (vPT); 4) very bioaccumulative and toxic (vBT); 5) carcinogenic; 6) mutagenic; 7) reproductive or developmental toxicant; 8) endocrine disruptor; or 9) neuro- toxicant. "Toxic" (T) includes both human toxicity and ecotoxicity.





About Getting Ready for Baby

The Getting Ready for Baby coalition, created in 2013, includes over 75 environmental, health-based, environmental justice, parent and health care provider organizations working to eliminate toxic chemicals from the infant and toddler product industry.

www.gettingready4baby.org