

# Get toxic chemicals out of kids' products.

Ask your legislator to cosponsor and support

## An act relative to toxic free kids ([H4357](#), [S2660](#))

Sponsored by Senator Jo Comerford and Representative James Hawkins

**Problem:** Toxic chemicals shouldn't be in things children use every day. Unfortunately, children's products can contain PFAS, lead, asbestos, phthalates, bisphenols, and other chemicals that are harmful to children's health and development. Meanwhile, rates of childhood and young adult cancer, neurodevelopmental illnesses, and reproductive disorders have risen sharply over the past 50 years.

Scientists report that an **overwhelming body of evidence links toxic exposures, especially early life exposures, to these rising disease rates.**<sup>1</sup>

**Solution:** The **Act relative to toxic free kids** protects children from toxic chemicals that can cause lifelong harm. The bill:

- Bans PFAS in children's products;
- Requires Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to create a list of **Chemicals of Concern**. These are chemicals that are carcinogens; mutagens; endocrine disrupters, reproductive, developmental or neurodevelopmental toxicants, skin and respiratory sensitizers — and chemicals that are persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic;
- Requires manufacturers to disclose any Chemicals of Concern that are in their products;
- Requires MassDEP to create a list of **High Priority Chemicals**. These are chemicals on the Chemicals of Concern list that are also in household dust, drinking water, and blood serum, are known to readily escape from products, and are banned from children's products by another state;
- Bans High Priority Chemicals from children's products;
- Gives manufacturers 3 years to remove High Priority Chemicals from products for children under 3, children's personal care products, and mouthable items;
- Gives manufacturers 5 years to remove High Priority Chemicals from products for children 12 and under
- Allows businesses to request waivers and exemptions;
- Requires banned chemicals to be replaced with safer alternatives.



Source: Ecology Center of Michigan

- **Childhood cancer** rates have increased **35%** (1975-2021).<sup>2</sup>
- **Young adult cancer** rates have increased **35%** (1975-2021).<sup>3</sup>
- **Neurodevelopmental illness** in children up **38%** (1997 to 2017); 17.6% of children have neurodevelopmental disease, sharpest increases in ADHD and autism.<sup>4</sup>
- **Asthma** incidence has **tripled** between 2001-2021.<sup>5</sup>
- **Male reproductive disorders** have **doubled** from 1960 to 2010.<sup>6</sup>

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“These increases (in pediatric cancer rates) are too rapid to be due to genetic change. They cannot be explained by increased access to medical care or by improvements in diagnosis.... Recognition is growing that **hazardous exposures in the environment are powerful causes of cancer in children.**”

Dr. Philip Landrigan, Director, Global Public Health Initiative, Boston College  
[https://www.cancerfreeeconomy.org/childhood\\_cancer\\_prevention/](https://www.cancerfreeeconomy.org/childhood_cancer_prevention/)

In January 2025, the *New England Journal of Medicine* published a major new article, written by 25 of the nation's leading pediatricians and environmental health experts, calling upon policy makers to better protect children from toxic chemical exposures, particularly prenatal and early life exposures.

According to one of the authors, **“The evidence is so overwhelming, and the effects of manufactured chemicals are so disruptive for children, that inaction is no longer an option...”**<sup>7</sup>

Massachusetts should join states like New York, Oregon and Washington that have enacted similar laws to reduce illness by getting toxic chemicals out of children's products.

**Products specifically made for children should not contain chemicals known to harm children.**

“...epidemiologic data, along with laboratory studies of animals, clearly indicate that **exposures to certain toxic chemicals, even at very low levels of exposure, elevate the risk for children to develop neurodevelopmental disorders**, such as intellectual and learning disabilities, autism, and ADHD.”

Dr. Deborah Hirtz

Pediatrics Magazine, American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9923610/>

- 1 [https://www.cancerfreeeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CFE\\_ChildhoodCancerPrevention\\_Report\\_F2.pdf](https://www.cancerfreeeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CFE_ChildhoodCancerPrevention_Report_F2.pdf) and [https://www.cancerfreeeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021\\_CCP\\_Report\\_Anniversary\\_Addendum\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cancerfreeeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021_CCP_Report_Anniversary_Addendum_FINAL.pdf)
- 2 National Cancer Institute, Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results Program, ages under 15, [https://seer.cancer.gov/statistics-network/explorer/application.html?site=1&data\\_type=1&graph\\_type=1&compareBy=sex&chk\\_sex\\_1=1&rate\\_type=2&race=1&age\\_range=16&advopt\\_precision=1&advopt\\_show\\_ci=on&hdn\\_view=0&advopt\\_show\\_apc=on&advopt\\_display=2](https://seer.cancer.gov/statistics-network/explorer/application.html?site=1&data_type=1&graph_type=1&compareBy=sex&chk_sex_1=1&rate_type=2&race=1&age_range=16&advopt_precision=1&advopt_show_ci=on&hdn_view=0&advopt_show_apc=on&advopt_display=2).
- 3 *Ibid.*, ages 15-39.
- 4 Hirtz, Dr. Deborah, et al, Targeting Environmental Neurodevelopmental Risks to Protect Children, Pediatrics Magazine, vol 139, issue 2, Feb 2017 at <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/139/2/e20162245>.
- 5 Consortium for Children's Environmental Health (Philip Landrigan MD et al), Manufactured Chemicals and Children's Health—The Need for New Law, New England Journal of Medicine, vol 392:3, Jan 2025 at <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMms2409092>.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Gillam, Carey, “Health experts rally for ‘call to arms’ to protect children from toxic chemicals,” The Guardian, Jan 8, 2025 at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/08/health-experts-childrens-health-chemicals-paper>.

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