

Lead and Phthalates: Parental Awareness and Environmental Health Resources

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Abstract

Although children are more susceptible to the impacts of environmental health hazards than adults, they have less adequate means to reduce their exposure to environmental health hazards. Parents can influence the types and amounts of toxic and potentially hazardous chemicals that their children are exposed to at home. However, in order for someone to take action on an environmental health issue they must be aware that a risk exists (Habib et al., 2006).

Two substances that many families are exposed to in their homes are phthalates and lead (CDC, 2009; Rudel et al., 2003). It is important to understand how parents' view these environmental health risks and their accessibility to environmental health education and resources. At the moment, it is unclear how parents in Burlington are reducing their children's exposure to environmental health risks, what resources they turn to most for information and what environmental health topics are being addressed by various health and environmental organizations within Vermont.

This study takes a qualitative approach to understanding these three topics and the flow of information between parents and environmental health organizations. In this study government, non-profit, and community organizations active in Burlington were identified, resources provided by these organizations were analyzed for trends in topics and communication methods. In addition, a questionnaire on environmental health topics and resources is being distributed to parents with children under the age of 6 in Burlington.

The results from this study will provide a better understanding of 1) what resources and environmental health topics parents are familiar with and interested in use and 2) the organizations and people providing resources to parents.

References

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