



Dear Advocate,

Thank you for your interest in creating healthier communities by taking a stand to protect children from toxic chemicals found in commonly used products and toys.

Environmental Advocates is proud of our legacy of successfully educating New Yorkers about the silent dangers of toxics and their risk to public health. Chemicals in children's toys pose a silent threat and can cause health problems and developmental delays in children.

Spreading the word in your community can make a difference! The attached toolkit can guide you through raising awareness on this issue that impacts you, your family, friends and neighbors.

Materials include:

- Action steps to raise awareness in your community
- Fact sheet on child safe products
- Tips for writing a letter to the editor

For more information or assistance, please contact Kristin Legere at 518-462-5526 ext. 242 or klegere@eany.org. Thank you again for taking a stand for community and environmental safety.

Sincerely,

Peter M. Iwanowicz
Executive Director



**ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK**

YOUR GOVERNMENT WATCHDOG

Child Safe Products Action Kit

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Child Safe Products Action Steps

Below are actions you can take that can help raise awareness on the dangers of chemicals in children's toys in your community.

- 1. Don't assume everything you see on a store shelf has been vetted for safety!** Most people assume that if a product has made its way to a store, it has gone through the rigors of testing for both health and safety checks. Unfortunately, this is not true. Many products are marketed as being "green" without any disclosure of what is in the product. The burden to protect our families from unnecessary exposure falls on each of us.
- 2. Swap for safer alternatives if possible.** Use glass instead of plastic to avoid unnecessary chemicals leaching into your food. Make your own cleaning products with baking soda, white vinegar, and lemons. It's cheap, easy to use, and non-toxic.
- 3. Contact your state, county, town or village legislators and leaders. Ask them to commit to protecting our children.** Whether you are familiar with your legislators or this is your first contact, sharing the information enclosed can help educate them about the dangerous chemicals children can be exposed to.
- 4. Engage neighbors, friends, and community partners in your efforts.** Start raising awareness on the issue with your friends and neighbors; connect with groups you know of that want to ensure your community is protected from environmental dangers or reach out to new organizations.
- 5. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.** Writing a letter to your newspaper on this issue can help inform legislators and the public, as well as illustrate how this issue impacts your community. Keep your letter short and to the point – 250 words maximum. Use your own voice to share why your community needs to act.

Child Safe Products Fact Sheet

- Unbelievably, hundreds of known toxic chemicals are used to make children's products without restriction or even basic reporting that would allow parents to make informed decisions about the items they purchase for their family.
- Children are more susceptible to the harmful effects of chemicals than adults, due to their developing systems.
- New York needs to protect children from harmful chemicals and reduce toxic exposure by allowing the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to regulate and – in cases of significant public health concern – ban the use of some dangerous chemicals in children's products.
- New York State currently regulates chemical exposure on a chemical-by-chemical basis – which is cumbersome and ineffective in protecting our children.
- Many local governments have taken action on this important issue, passing legislation banning toxics from children's toys, including Albany, Westchester, and Suffolk counties.
- Other states, including Maine and Washington, have acted similarly in creating infrastructures that categorizes chemicals of concern (based on the likelihood of a child's exposure) and require manufacturers to disclose whether their products contain these chemicals.

Child Safe Products Write a Letter to the Editor

Writing a letter to your newspaper on this issue can help inform legislators and the public, and illustrate the need to protect our kids from chemicals.

Some tips for writing a letter to the editor include:

- Keep your letter short and to the point, no more than 250 words.
- Check with your local newspaper guidelines paper for word limits and submission guidelines. These sections are typically under the 'Contact Us' tab of the outlet's website.
- Use your own voice – the talking points included here can give you context but make it your own and add your point of view.
- Share a personal story to highlight why this issue is important to you or someone in your community.
- Focus your letter on what matters most to you.
- Use the opening sentence to draw readers in, which will compel them to read further.
- Explain why the issue is important to you, and New York State.
- State your opinion and what should be done (like removing toxic toys from store shelves).
- Avoid using jargon and/or acronyms.
- Keep the tone of your letter polite and informational.

Resources

Environmental Advocates of New York Website
www.eany.org

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<https://www.facebook.com/EnvironmentalAdvocatesofNewYork>

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