

Press Release

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New ChildSafe Guidelines Announced for Green Cleaning Products Used in Schools

Stringent Requirements Raise the Bar for Manufacturers - List of Compliant Products Now Available Online

(Port Washington, NY) Grassroots Environmental Education, a New York non-profit, has announced the publication of its newly revised ChildSafe Guidelines for cleaning products used in schools and day-care centers, along with a list of products that meet the new Guidelines. The new Guidelines contain the most stringent requirements of any published green cleaning standard.

The ChildSafe Guidelines, which were originally developed in 2006 based on standards published by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior, were the first to acknowledge the unique vulnerability of children to environmental toxins, and to set threshold limits for certain chemicals commonly found in commercial cleaning products, some of which have been associated with an increased incidence of environmentally mediated illnesses, including asthma, allergies, certain types of cancer, learning and behavioral disorders, endocrine disruption, chemical sensitivity, and kidney or liver damage.

"School is really the child's workplace," says Dr. Joel Forman, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Community and Preventive Medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York. "Children spend eight plus hours a day, five days a week in school, so the counterpart of adult occupation medicine is pediatric medicine focusing on exposures in schools."

Recent scientific evidence that chronic, low level exposures to petrochemicals commonly found in institutional cleaning products are a significant health hazard for children has fueled increased demand for safer products. Those that meet the new Guidelines are among the safest ever produced.

"We think its time to raise the bar again," says Grassroots Executive Director Patti Wood, author of the Guidelines. "Consumer demand has pushed the green cleaning industry to make remarkable progress in just a few years, and we want

to recognize those companies who have pushed the limits of technology to protect the health of all sensitive populations, especially children.”

Most schools and child care facilities are cleaned every day, leaving behind fresh residues of cleaning chemicals on surfaces with which children come into direct contact. Researchers have found that early exposures to environmental toxins appear more likely to produce chronic disease than similar exposures encountered later in life. This is of particular concern for pregnant women working in schools since the developing fetus is particularly at risk from maternal exposures to certain chemicals.

"Our members are concerned about environmental exposures at work for themselves, and for students," says Kathleen Donahue, Vice-President of New York State United Teachers. "If school districts adhere to these guidelines it will go a long way in protecting future generations."

Patrick Pizzo, director of facilities of East Meadow Public Schools, one of the largest school systems on Long Island, points out that the new generation of green cleaning products is not only safe and effective, but cost-competitive.

"A comprehensive approach to green cleaning can achieve cost savings, while maintaining a safe and clean environment," says Pizzo. "The efficient use of bio-based products, and equipment that reduces or eliminates the need for cleaning chemicals, has enabled our district to realize substantial savings while simultaneously reducing its impact on the environment and children's health."

Online resources

[The ChildSafe Guidelines](#)
[The ChildSafe Product List](#)
[Clean & Green video](#) (11 min.)

About Grassroots:

Grassroots Environmental Education is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to researching and disseminating information about chemical toxins and their impact on human health and the environment. Founded in 2000, Grassroots currently serves local governments, school systems, community groups, other environmental organizations and individuals across the nation. The organization's website is www.grassrootsinfo.org