

Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative: An Overview

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Concerning Statistics

- > **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COMBINED** est. 12 million children in U.S. suffer from one or more learning, developmental or behavioral disorder (*J. of Pediatrics, 1994*)
- > **MENTAL RETARDATION** - affects 1.4 million children under 18 (*AAMR, 2003*)
- > **AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER** - affects 450,000 children under the age of 18 and appears to be 10x more prevalent than in the 1980s (*JAMA, 2003*)

Environmental contributors are the least researched and most preventable



- > 80,000 chemicals put on the market since the 1940s
- > 1.2 to 5 billion tons of chemicals discharged annually in the U.S.
- > 1500 to 2500 new chemicals each year
- > Of the 15,000 most in use, no toxicity data exists for 43% (EPA)
- > Complete neurotoxicity data for only 12 chemicals (EPA)

Child Health Exposures

> Prenatal

- transplacental
- developmental windows

> Postnatal

- pound per pound children eat, drink and breath far more than adults
- prolonged gastric emptying
- increased metabolic rate
- increased time indoors & on floors
- breast milk (*still best to breastfeed, but breast milk now contains many contaminants*)



Costs to Society

- > Illiteracy
- > Drop-out rate
- > Violence & abuse
- > Unemployment
- > Health care
- > Special education
- > Economic costs over a lifetime



Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative (LDDI)

- > **Educating** state and national learning and developmental disabilities (LDD) groups.
- > **Translating** emerging science into materials to be used at workshops and on websites for lay audiences.
- > **Organizing** meetings nationally and regionally to build collaborative partnerships between LDD groups, researchers, health professionals and environmental health advocates.
- > **Advocating** for specific bills that would eliminate neurotoxicants by educating policymakers.

LDDI: Specific Steps Forward

- LDDI resolution
- National and regional meetings
- LDA, AAMR, ASA's enviro health initiatives
- Analysis of CDC biomonitoring report
- "Practice Prevention" columns
- Congressional briefing
- Policy opportunities (mercury, lindane, PBDEs, developmental neurotoxicity testing, etc.)
- New state initiatives

Engaging Learning and Developmental Disabilities Groups

Over 200 groups and individuals including:

- Learning Disabilities Association of America
 - American Association on Mental Retardation
 - The Arc of the United States
 - The Autism Society of America
 - SafeMinds
 - National Association for the Dually Diagnosed
 - Communities Against Violence
- And many others...

How you can get involved - CHE www.healthandenvironment.org



...and learn more about...

CHE's LDDI Working Group:

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