



BUSINESSES AND RETAILERS PHASE OUT THEIR USE OF PHTHALATES IN CHILDREN'S TOYS

Phthalates in children's vinyl toys: Phthalates are chemical substances that make PVC (polyvinyl chloride), or vinyl plastic, soft and flexible. Over ninety percent of phthalates are used in the manufacture of PVC products. Among many other things, phthalates are used in soft PVC toys and other baby products, such as teething rings, rubber duckies, and bath books. Phthalates can leach out of these toys over time, making children's natural behavior - exploring the world by putting things in their mouths - especially concerning and potentially dangerous.

Safer products are available: Safer cost-effective alternatives to phthalates exist, such as PVC-free toys that are manufactured without these harmful additives. Safer alternatives to PVC baby/children's products and toys include toys made out of biobased plastics, polyethylenes, polypropylenes, thermoplastic elastomers, and ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA) that are free of these toxic additives.

Many leading toy companies are restricting these chemicals: A number of leading baby and children's toys manufacturers such as Brio, Chicco, Evenflo, First Years, Gerber, International Playthings, Lamaze Infant Development, Lego Systems, Sassy, and Tiny Love have voluntarily committed to phasing out all PVC toys including and prioritizing those containing phthalates.

Retailers are phasing out toxic chemicals in toys: Over 10 years ago, European retailer Ikea phased out all PVC toys including those containing phthalates. We are now beginning to see similar movement in the United States. Over the past two years, some of the largest retailers in the U.S., including Wal-Mart, Target, Sears Holdings (Sears and Kmart), and Toys'R'Us, have announced major policies to phase out or restrict toxic chemicals such as phthalates and/or PVC in children's toys and infant products.

Toys 'R' Us phthalate, lead, and PVC policy: In February 2008, Toys 'R' Us announced that by the end of 2008, all juvenile products it sells must be produced without the addition of phthalates.

Target's phthalate and PVC policy: Target has agreed to systematically reduce its use of PVC and phthalates in children's products. The company is phasing out phthalates in most of their toys by fall 2008. They are also eliminating phthalates in baby changing tables by January 2008.

Wal-Mart's phthalate policy: Wal-Mart most recently announced they are requiring suppliers to significantly limit phthalates in children's products. They have also required suppliers to phase out PVC in children's lunch boxes, baby bibs, and packaging; and are beginning to address PVC used in building materials and electronics. The company also supports an industry-wide standard to remove PVC from all products intended for kids.

There are still many products on the market that contain phthalates because there is no federal law banning the use of these chemicals in children's toys and child care articles. Please include the Feinstein Amendment banning phthalates from children's toys in the House/Senate Consumer Product Safety Commission Reform Act.

Information for this fact sheet provided by Michael Schade, PVC Campaign Coordinator, Center for Health, Environment and Justice (February, 2008).

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