



Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

[of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment](#)



Biweekly Bulletin November 4, 2009

This bulletin lists upcoming events plus recent announcements, news and journal articles, calls for proposals and other items related to learning and developmental disabilities and environmental health. They are archived and searchable on LDDI's website:

www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/learning/r/bulletins (Note the new URL).

LDDI Highlights

LDDI Website Move and Update

Nancy Snow at CHE has been working hard to get resources transferred from the old LDDI site under ICEH to its new home at CHE. Please stay tuned as this website grows!

www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/learning

Biomonitoring Project

The LDDI biomonitoring project is moving very rapidly, with a report release projected for February 2010. All participants have seen their results, and consultations are underway with the physician designated for the project. Media outreach is our key focus at this time, and LDDI is working with a communications firm, the Raben Group, to reach our goals. For more information, please contact Laura Abulafia, National Coordinator for LDDI: laura@healthandenvironment.org

Radio Interview

Laura Abulafia from AAIDD will be interviewed on Saturday November 7th at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time for a lifestyle magazine AM radio show in the Northeast called "Greener Living." This live phone interview will include a discussion on environmental factors that impact learning and developmental disability and the health of people with LDDs.

www.wtic.com/pages/1634184.php

Teleconference November 10th

AAIDD is hosting its monthly teleconference, sponsored by the John Merck Fund, titled "1 + 1 + 1 = 300: The Effect of Multiple Environmental Toxins on the Developing Brain, Bowel, and Immune System." For more information see event #3 below.

LDAA Annual Meeting

The Learning Disabilities Association of America is hosting their annual meeting in February 2010 in Baltimore, Maryland, including a symposium on toxic chemicals and brain development at which leaders from LDDI will be speaking. Additional speakers include policymakers such as Maryland Assemblyman James Hubbard, who introduced environmental-health legislation in Maryland on BPA and other chemicals and heads a group of state legislators on TSCA reform.

New Members

The Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative welcomes these new members:

- Christina Cicack, Eugene, Oregon
- Sarah Dyles, Tampa, Florida
- Angel Ip, MS, MPA, Seattle, Washington
- Stephen Koos, OD, Amherst, Ohio

Announcements

A daily news feed with articles and announcements is available on CHE's website:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/announce>.

[Comments invited: Healthy People 2020.](#)

The US Department of Health and Human Services invites comments on the proposed Healthy People 2020 objectives. Comments will be accepted through December 31, 2009.

[EPA proceeds with revoking regulations allowing carbofuran pesticide residues on food.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is moving forward to implement the agency's May 2009 final rule revoking tolerances, or residue limits, for the pesticide carbofuran. EPA continues to find that dietary exposures to carbofuran from all sources combined are not safe.

[EPA posts new schools air toxics monitoring initiative data.](#)

The first results from ongoing air toxics monitoring at 63 schools in 22 states are now available on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website.

[EPA releases guide to help scientists understand children's exposure to pollutants.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today released a user-friendly document to help risk assessors understand how children are exposed to pollution.

[Call for proposals: EPA Environmental Education Grants.](#)

EPA's Environmental Education Division (EED), Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental Education, supports environmental education projects that enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to help people make informed decisions that affect environmental quality. The deadline for application for a 2010 grant is December 15, 2009.

[Environmental education grants available.](#)

Proposals for Environmental Education grants to develop new programs or to improve the quality of existing programs will be accepted through December 15, 2009, from communities in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska by EPA Region 7 in Kansas City, Kansas.

[Call for proposals: Environmental Justice Small Grants Program.](#)

The primary purposes of proposed projects should be to develop an understanding of environmental and public health issues and to identify ways to address these issues at the local level, and educate and empower the community. Applications are due January 8, 2010.

[Job openings: Atlanta, Georgia.](#)

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has several openings on its leadership team.

Upcoming Events

Online Calendar. These and more upcoming events are listed in a searchable calendar:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi>

1) Biological Monitoring of Exposures to Organophosphorus Pesticides: Challenges and Opportunities

Thursday November 5, 2009

12:30 - 1:20 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at the University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Room T-435

Sponsor: University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

Christopher D. Simpson, PhD, MSc, associate professor of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences at the University of Washington will speak.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Sarah Fischer fischs@u.washington.edu

2) Healthy People 2020 Public Meeting

Saturday November 7, 2009

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

at Thomas Jefferson University, Jefferson School of Population Health

Sponsor: US Department of Health and Human Services

This meeting will help set national public health goals and objectives for Healthy People 2020. The public meeting is open to everyone, but seating is limited. The public is invited to submit a question or comment ahead of time, via the website, about the development of Healthy People 2020. Your questions will be addressed at the public meeting. An agenda will be posted before the meeting.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 2020regional@air.org

3) 1 + 1 + 1 = 300: The Effect of Multiple Environmental Toxins on the Developing Brain, Bowel, and Immune System

Tuesday November 10, 2009

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
Environmental Health Initiative

Cindy Schneider, MD, will present evidence to support genetic vulnerability to environmental toxins in individuals with autism. She will discuss ways in which mercury, lead, viruses and/or pesticides could lead to neurological, gastrointestinal, and immune-system damage in individuals who have inherited certain genes that affect their ability to clear these toxins and infections. Potential treatments to overcome these metabolic weaknesses will be reviewed, and the success of many popular interventions will be explained using this model.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Laura Abulafia, Laura@aaidd.org

4) Toxic Environmental Threats to Children's Development: What We Know and What We Can Do

Saturday November 14, 2009

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Boston, Massachusetts

at Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, 221 Rivermoor Street

Sponsor: the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, the Boston Institute for the Development of Infants and Parents (BIDIP) and the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society

Emerging scientific evidence alerts us to the ways that environmental toxins affect children's brains, bodies and behavior. As family members and as professionals, it is critical that we understand the role that these substances play in children's development, and understand what we can do to minimize these risks. This conference will present cutting-edge research on the effects of toxins - such as lead, food additives, and endocrine disruptors found in plastics, cans and other sources - on intellectual, emotional and physical development. We will hear about practical approaches, programs and interventions that have successfully reduced exposure to these chemicals, including programs targeting families living in urban housing. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss how to apply the information learned at the conference in their own practices, communities and family lives. Speakers include Philip Landrigan, MD; David Bellinger, PhD; Bernard Weiss, PhD; Megan Sandel, MD; and Barbara Brenner, DrPH.

Price: \$135 for 6 CE credits, \$155 for 6 CME credits, or \$67.50 for 6 CE/CME credits for graduate students, unemployed or retired professionals

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: MSPP, 617-244-1682 or ce@mspp.edu

5) EMBL Workshop on Translating Behaviour: Bridging Clinical and Animal Model Research

Saturday through Monday, November 14 - 16, 2009
Heidelberg, Germany

Sponsor: European Molecular Biology Laboratory

The goal of this workshop is to bring together behavioral neuroscientists working on animal models with clinical researchers studying human behavior. The main question to be addressed by the workshop is how animal models can best be used to discover treatments for behavioral disorders, including mental illness. The workshop will try to cover a range of commonly studied behaviors relevant to human disease, including anxiety, impulsivity and aggression, but also more controversial topics such as depression, schizophrenia, autism and attachment.

Price: 375 EUR, 325 EUR for students

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: see [the contact page](#)

6) World Congress on Disabilities Conference and Expo

Thursday and Friday, November 19 - 20, 2009
Jacksonville, Florida
at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center

Sponsor: World Congress on Disabilities

The conference will present issues facing the disability community from experts. Some presentations address nutritional and other environmental contributors to disabilities, especially autism spectrum disorders. See the full list of sessions on the website.

Price: \$150 until October 16th, \$175 from October 17th to November 15th, or \$195 after that

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: WCD, 201-722-9233 or info@wcdexpo.com

7) Healthy People 2020 Public Meeting

Friday November 20, 2009
Seattle, Washington
at Red Lion Hotel on Fifth Avenue

Sponsor: US Department of Health and Human Services

This meeting will help set national public health goals and objectives for Healthy People 2020. The public meeting is open to everyone, but seating is limited. The public is invited to submit a question or comment ahead of time, via the website, about the development of Healthy People 2020. Your questions will be addressed at the public meeting. An agenda will be posted before the meeting.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 2020regional@air.org

8) New Habits of Mind for New Solutions

Friday November 20, 2009

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at NWETC Headquarters, 650 South Orcas Street, Suite 220

Sponsor: EOS Alliance

This eight-hour class is about systems thinking, systems in the natural world, and ways to increase our ability to address complex problems. Our class will give you the competence and confidence to start using systems thinking in your organizations and communities to better understand complex problems - whether you find them in the natural environment or in social systems. Participants will learn what makes a system a system, and why systems thinking is so useful and so necessary in our world. We'll share our understanding of the ways and habits of systems thinking, as well as how to apply these habits. We'll learn about some systems thinking tools, such as causal loops and behavior over time graphs, and how to identify feedback loops. We'll use the "iceberg model" to deepen our understanding of leverage points for change. At the end, we'll put it all together - applications and practice. Learning will occur through hands-on activities such as small group conversations, large group dialogue, individual reflection, system thinking games, viewing personal stories through a new lens, and the collaborative exploration of complex problems. Both instructors' intense interest in the natural world has been enriched through the study and application of systems thinking.

Price: \$195, \$155 reduced tuition for Native American tribes; government employees; nonprofits; students; and NAEP, NEBC, NWAEP members

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Northwest Environmental Training Center, 206-762-1976

9) Making Healthy Babies, Raising Healthy Children: Living Well in a Toxic World

Saturday November 21, 2009

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Berkeley, California

at the UC Berkeley Art Museum Theatre, 2625 Durant Avenue

Sponsor: Sage Femme, Ryder Foundation, Midwifery Today, Autism Recovery Consortium

The 2009 CIA World Factbook ranks the USA 45th among nations for infant mortality -- the worst among all industrialized countries. The autism rate in our country is now 1 in 100. How can we understand and take appropriate steps to ensure healthy mothers, births and children? Take a unique look at the entire system that affects our future generations. This symposium brings together scientists, doctors, researchers and professionals for a compelling conversation about environmental influences around birth and childhood. It features plenary speakers, panels, audience questions and film clips. Revolutionary new software will also be introduced that will help parents assess the risks our children may encounter from the environment before birth, at birth and during childhood. Our three-part program will make clearer to attendees what they should know

about environmental health, their world, and how it affects them and their children.

Price: \$60 until October 31st, \$75 after that; a student discount is available

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: see the [Contact page](#)

10) A Presentation on the National Child Health Study

Thursday December 3, 2009

12:30 - 1:20 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at the University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Room T-435

Sponsor: University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

Elaine Faustman, PhD, professor of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences and adjunct professor of the Evans School, will speak.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Sarah Fischer fischs@u.washington.edu

News and Journal Articles

[Links between city walkability and air pollution exposure revealed.](#)

Tuesday, November 03, 2009

A new study compares neighborhoods' walkability (degree of ease for walking) with local levels of air pollution and finds that some neighborhoods might be good for walking, but have poor air quality. ScienceDaily.

[Smoking while pregnant linked to behavioural problems in children.](#)

Tuesday, November 03, 2009

Smoking during pregnancy significantly increases the risk of having a child with behavioural problems, according to research published today. London Guardian, United Kingdom.

[See related articles: [Smoking parents 'risk children's health'](#) and [Great American Smokeout can help pets, too](#)]

[Soy foods: eating too much of a good thing might be bad, scientists say.](#)

Tuesday, November 03, 2009

Americans consume over \$4 billion of soy foods each year because of their many health benefits. But new studies suggest that eating large amounts of soy's estrogen-mimicking compounds might reduce fertility in women, trigger early puberty and disrupt development of fetuses and children. Environmental Health News.

[Applying research to public health questions: Timing and the environmentally relevant dose.](#)

Tuesday, November 03, 2009

There are several recent examples of how research supported by the NIEHS is leading to paradigm shifts in understanding how environmental toxicants -- even at very low-level exposures -- can have significant consequences, including dysfunction and disease. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[Toxic contaminants: The other scourge.](#)

Monday, November 02, 2009

As the world focuses on the impact of climate change, little attention is being paid to yet another environmental bane: increasing contamination of air, water and soil. Inter Press Service.

[Paint it green.](#)

Sunday, November 01, 2009

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air is three times more polluted than outdoor air. Indianapolis Star, Indiana.

[State law bans electronic waste in landfills.](#)

Sunday, November 01, 2009

A new state law banning electronics in landfills could make it easier for consumers to recycle their old TVs, computers and DVD players, and might even save them money. Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune, Wisconsin.

[EPA works quickly to regulate mercury, other toxic emissions.](#)

Saturday, October 31, 2009

A settlement agreement requiring the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to regulate mercury and other toxic pollutants from coal- and oil-fired power plants puts the agency on a very tight timeline. Charleston State Journal, West Virginia.

[See related articles: [Mercury study to be pared down](#) and [Mercury exposure, nutritional deficiencies and metabolic disruptions may affect learning in children](#)]

[Horrendous legacy.](#)

Saturday, October 31, 2009

In the city of Bhopal, in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, hundreds of children are being born with deformities and mental health problems 25 years after the world's worst industrial accident. Melbourne Age, Australia.

[California Office of Environmental Health Hazard assessment review verifies safety of synthetic turf.](#)

Friday, October 30, 2009

Representing the latest convincing data on the safety of synthetic turf, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, California Environmental Protection Agency, released a report last week dated July 2009 which indicated there is a negligible human health risk from inhaling the air above synthetic turf. Reuters.

[Studies find pregnant mothers' flu shots help babies.](#)

Friday, October 30, 2009

Newborns whose mothers got seasonal flu shots during pregnancy were less likely to be born premature, underweight, and in need of hospital care for respiratory illnesses, three new studies found. Philadelphia Inquirer, Pennsylvania.

[See a related article about the H1N1 flu vaccine: [Flu study reassures pregnant women, children](#)]

[Polybrominated diphenyl ethers \(PBDEs\) and hexabromocyclodecane \(HBCD\) in composite U.S. food samples](#)

Thursday, October 29, 2009

PBDEs and HBCDs currently contaminate some food purchased in U.S, although PBDE intake estimated in this study is lower than reported in our previous market basket surveys. HBCD is in food at higher levels than expected based on previously reported levels in milk and blood compared to PBDE levels, and is comparable to European levels. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[U.S. government plans major study of the safety of BPA.](#)

Thursday, October 29, 2009

The National Institutes of Health will devote \$30 million to study the safety of bisphenol A, an estrogen-like chemical used in many plastics, including sippy cups and the linings of metal cans. USA Today.

[See a related article: [Study cites prevalence of BPA](#) and an opposing report: [Consumer Reports BPA study filled with factual errors](#)]

[Idling school buses spew black carbon, fine particles.](#)

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Idling longer than one minute in a school zone is illegal in New York City, but the laws are rarely enforced. That puts children at risk when they leave school. Idling vehicles in

New York City spew out as much pollution as nine million diesel trucks driving from the Bronx to Staten Island. Environmental Health News.

[See a related article: [Shut off that school bus!](#)]

Halloween costume makeup has lead.

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

Some children's face paints are laced with undisclosed heavy metals that are known to be both acutely poisonous and to cause long-term health problems, ranging from skin sensitivity and brain damage. Daily Green.

[See a related article: [The scariest part of Halloween](#)]

Coal ash poses significant risk: EPA report says.

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

A new EPA report says that the potentially toxic pollutants in coal ash -- from mercury to arsenic -- are of particular concern because they can concentrate in large amounts that are discharged to waterways or seep into groundwater. Nashville Tennessean, Tennessee.

[See other stories about water-pollution problems: [New concerns raised over blacktop sealant runoff](#), [Portland harbor contamination poses risk to humans, environment, study shows](#), [Toxic waste trickles toward New Mexico's water sources](#) and [Ground control: Farmers part of the problem, solution to water pollution](#)]

New pesticide is no strawberry shortcake.

Tuesday, October 27, 2009

Leading scientists who have reviewed the proposed use of methyl iodide on strawberries have serious concerns about this chemical. Woodland Daily Democrat, California.

Pollutants in students' blood unrelated to recent food/dust exposure.

Monday, October 26, 2009

Persistent pollutants measured in the blood of college students may be the remnants of past exposures instead of current exposures through food and dust, researchers conclude in a recently published study. Environmental Health News.

Treaty may force farms to halt use of pesticide.

Sunday, October 25, 2009

Australian farmers may be forced to stop using a dangerous insecticide already banned in more than 60 countries. Endosulfan has been linked to breast cancer, immunosuppression and birth defects, and was recently implicated in the discovery of millions of two-headed fish larvae in a Noosa River hatchery. Sydney Morning Herald, Australia.

Survey and health assessment of the exposure of 2 year-olds to chemical substances in consumer products.

Friday, October 23, 2009

It can be concluded that not only is there a need to reduce exposure to anti-androgens and oestrogen-like substances from food products, indoor air and dust, but also to reduce exposure to the studied product groups, as these contribute to both indoor air and dust and to direct exposure, based on the assumptions made in this report.. Danish Environmental Protection Agency.

Pesticide exposure and suicidal ideation in rural communities in Zhejiang province, China.

Friday, October 23, 2009

A potential marker of chronic pesticide exposure was found to be associated with suicidal ideation, which supports findings from previous studies. Bulletin of the World Health Organization.

EPA aims to widen rules on lead paint in older homes.

Friday, October 23, 2009

The Environmental Protection proposed expanding requirements on how contractors must deal with lead-based paint to more, older homes, part of a broader effort by the agency to tighten environmental protections for consumers. Wall Street Journal.

[See related articles: [Landlords decry ordinance forcing them to clean up lead paint](#), [Wisconsin enacts new rules to protect children from lead](#), [New law: No more lead in California](#) and [N.J. health officials propose tighter standards for lead poisoning](#).]

Environmental report gives NWI another bad mark.

Thursday, October 22, 2009

Indiana industries led the nation in toxic chemical discharges in 2007 at 27.3 million pounds, according to a new report about toxic water pollution. Merrillville Post-Tribune, Indiana.

[See related articles from Pennsylvania: [Waterways burdened by pollution, report says](#), Georgia: [Savannah River fourth most polluted in nation](#), Iowa: [Group: Water pollution must be stopped](#), Ohio: [Ohio River leads nation in toxic discharge](#) and New Mexico: [Report: Morgan Lake pollution a health concern](#).]

Dow Chemical and dioxins: Cleanup deal's outcome could affect future initiatives.

Thursday, October 22, 2009

Dow Chemical is responsible for poisoning a river valley that stretches more than 50 miles into Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron. Now, after three decades, the Obama administration is stepping in with a new plan intended to scour away decades of contamination. Chicago Tribune, Illinois

[See an announcement of a related event: [EPA extends comment period on proposed Dow Chemical agreement: meeting Nov. 5, 7 p.m.](#)]

Campaign tries to stop pesticides near school.

Thursday, October 22, 2009

Tests of pesticides in the air near a St. Johns County elementary school have become ammunition in a national campaign to put new controls on farmers' use of sprays. St. Augustine Record, Florida.

Oil -- soil tests expose high toxic levels.

Thursday, October 22, 2009

Oil tests by the Uganda Wildlife Authority have shown unacceptable levels of heavy metals in the waste water and mud cuttings left behind by the oil companies in the process of their exploration activities. Kampala New Vision, Uganda.

Kicking formaldehyde out of bed.

Thursday, October 22, 2009

A bill backed by industry and environmental groups would set federal limits on a potentially dangerous chemical inside your home: formaldehyde. But it could mean a small increase in furniture prices for consumers. Wall Street Journal.

Mexican bean pots have dangerous levels of lead.

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

Mexican bean pots with up to 30 times the level of lead permitted by federal guidelines have been pulled from the shelves of a local food chain after a health inspector found one in a Concord home and tested it in a county lab. Contra Costa Times, California.

Are artificial sweeteners really that bad for you?

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

This week marks the 40th anniversary of the Food and Drug Administration's decision to ban cyclamate, the first artificial sweetener prohibited in the U.S., and yet scientists still haven't reached a consensus about how safe (or harmful) artificial sweeteners may be. Time Magazine.

[See a related article about a natural sweetener: [Stevia is sweet -- but is it safe?](#)]

St. Louis baby teeth yield new findings on nuclear fallout.

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

A New York-based research group released new findings that suggest male tooth donors who ended up with cancer as adults had twice as much of a radioactive isotope created by nuclear fallout as healthy donors who participated in a St. Louis study. St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Missouri.

Most of the news articles above come from

[Environmental Health News.](#)

The Collaborative on Health and the Environment offers this information as a service but does not endorse any of the events, articles or announcements.

Companion bulletins are available for different audiences:

- For those interested in general children's environmental health: http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/bulletins
- For those interested in environmental health in Washington State and the Pacific Northwest: <http://washington.chenw.org/bulletins.html>

While there is overlap with this bulletin, there are some events and announcements unique to those bulletins.

If you would like to join the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) and the LDDI Working Group, please complete the application on the CHE website: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/application> Joining CHE means receiving up to four email messages a month from the CHE National listserv. CHE costs nothing to join and the benefit is shared information and opportunities for further engagement, if you choose. Be sure to mark that you want to join the Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative Working Group at the bottom of the application.

Nancy Snow
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

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