

## A TOXIC FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN? REFORMING THE TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT (TSCA)

Today, nearly 80,000 chemicals are in use in the U.S., and yet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates only five of these. The Toxic Substances Control Act or TSCA -- the statute that regulates chemicals used by industry and in consumer products -- is inadequate to protect children's health, while the number of chemicals to which we expose our children continues to grow. It is time to renew our commitment to and strengthen our national approach to regulating chemicals to assure that human health is protected.

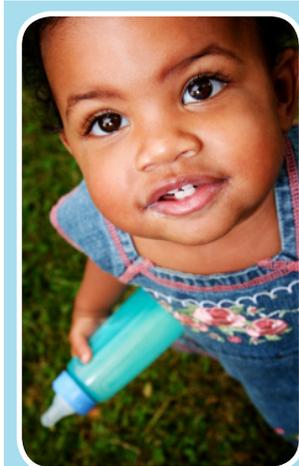
Children have unique vulnerabilities to harmful chemicals in their environment. A child's chemical exposure levels are greater, pound-for-pound, than those of an adult. Children can be less able to process and excrete chemicals than adults. We also know that children's developing organ systems are more vulnerable to damage from chemical exposures. An exposure which may cause little or no harm to an adult may lead to irreparable damage to a child. Further, children have more time in which to develop a disease triggered by early exposure to toxins, such as cancer.

A growing number of diseases affecting children are linked to unhealthy and unsafe environments. Chemical exposure can lead to neurotoxicity, neurobehavioral and reproductive problems, immune and hormonal disruptions, and is associated with a host of diseases. Research has shown that minimizing early exposure to harmful chemicals or products can prevent later health problems.

Given that in recent years, little effort has been made to reduce our use of and exposure to deadly chemicals, we must modernize TSCA and bolster our approach to regulating chemicals. We believe it is essential to put in place basic safety assessments for all chemicals in order to protect our children and other vulnerable populations from harmful toxins. As Congress begins work on reforming the TSCA, we urge support for a strong safety standard, new processes to ensure the products children are

routinely exposed to are safe, and the inclusion of provisions that will prioritize protecting the health of children and other vulnerable populations. Specifically, we ask that following principles and policies should be used as a framework for a modernized TSCA:

- **PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN.** Assessing chemicals against a strong health standard that requires protection of children and other vulnerable populations;
- **ADDITIONAL SAFETY MARGIN FOR CHILDREN.** Providing an additional safety margin for children, pregnant women, nursing women and women of child-bearing age;
- **PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN MOST AT RISK.** Addressing health disparities among low-income and minority children, children with special health care needs, and children whose parents have occupational exposure to chemicals, and reducing the disproportionate impact of toxic chemicals on children and other vulnerable populations.
- **NO EXPOSURE ALLOWED** to a chemical that does not meet basic information requirements.
- **NO LONGER ASSUMING THAT A CHEMICAL IS SAFE** until proven otherwise; the safety of a chemical must be demonstrated by the submission of required data.
- **CHEMICALS MUST GO THROUGH A REVIEW PROCESS ON A REGULAR BASIS** rather than receiving a one-time permanent approval.
- **STRONG ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS** including routine inspections and random audits of facilities and laboratories.
- **HEALTH INFORMATION CANNOT BE DECLARED "CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION,"** or CBI.



**For more information** about the TSCA, contact Shadi Houshyar, Vice President of Child Welfare at First Focus. [ShadiH@firstfocus.net](mailto:ShadiH@firstfocus.net); 202.657.0678.

The First Focus Campaign for Children is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization affiliated with First Focus, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization. The Campaign for Children advocates directly for legislative change in Congress to ensure children and families are a priority in federal policy and budget decisions.

