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21
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Child Safe Playing Field Act Signed into Law by New York Governor

(*Beyond Pesticides*, May 21, 2010) Governor Patterson of New York signed the *Child Safe Playing Field Act* into law on Tuesday, marking a huge victory for grassroots environmental and human health groups. The law helps to protect children by banning the use of pesticides on school playing fields and play grounds. Schools will have one year to comply with the regulations. In New York and across the country, schools routinely apply pesticides and "weed and feed" products (pesticides mixed with chemical fertilizers), which are linked to cancer, endocrine disruption, learning disabilities, asthma and other problems. Strong opposition from the pesticide industry had led to a previous version of the bill being defeated nine times. While the earlier versions of the legislation included all outdoor school grounds, the scope was narrowed to include only playgrounds and playing fields to help ensure passage. In addition, over 8,000 letters were sent to legislators in favor of the bill and over 18,000 people signed a petition, according to [Citizens Campaign for the Environment](#).

The *Child Safe Playing Field Act* requires that all schools, preschools, and day care centers both public and private to stop using pesticides on any playgrounds or playing fields. The law does allow for emergency application of pesticides for infestations if the County Health Department, the Commissioner of Health, the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation or the school board deems it an emergency. Containerized nonvolatile bait stations are also permitted for insect and rodent control. "The archaic practice of poisoning children's play grounds is coming to an end in New York State. We will now raise a generation of healthier, safer children because of this legislation," said Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director, Citizens' Campaign for the Environment.

While opponents of the bill argued that current pesticide regulations offer adequate protection to humans and the environment, many studies have shown that human health is increasingly at risk from pesticide exposure. Children are particularly in need of protection from pesticides, because their organ systems are still developing. They also have a faster rate of metabolism than adults meaning that with respect to body weight they take in more pesticides from food they eat and the air they breathe. Most recently, a [new report](#) has linked everyday pesticide usage to ADHD in children.

Many conventional pest control providers and chemical companies opposed the bill, arguing that pesticide free turf management will be much more expensive. In response, Grassroots Environmental Education along with organic horticulturalist Chip Osborne produced a [report](#) comparing the relative cost of chemical intensive and organic turf management. Their report showed that while expenses may be higher the first two years after switching to organic turf management, after the third year annual costs are anywhere from 7 to 25 percent lower than with chemical intensive management.

Across the country, state and local governments are instituting new policies in response to citizens' demands for stricter pesticide regulations. In [Massachusetts](#) carcinogenic pesticides or products that contain EPA List 1, Inerts or Toxicological Concern can no longer be applied to school grounds, and no pesticides can be applied for purely aesthetic reasons. In Connecticut pesticides cannot be used on day care center turf, or on school grounds for kindergarten through 8th grade. In [Branford, CT](#) all of the town's playing fields, parks, and public green spaces are managed without the use of pesticides. For a more extensive list of examples see [Beyond Pesticides activists tools pages](#).

Take Action: It is time for a national policy that would protect every child in the United States from pesticide exposure at school. Federal legislation, the *School Environment Protection Act of 2009* (SEPA), has been introduced by Rep. Rush Holt and would protect school children from pesticides used both indoors and on all school grounds nationwide. The legislation also bans the use of synthetic fertilizers. To learn more about this legislation and help its passage, see [Beyond Pesticides' SEPA webpage](#).

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This entry was posted on Friday, May 21st, 2010 at 9:23 am and is filed under [Children/Schools](#), [Lawns/Landscapes](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.

2 Responses to "Child Safe Playing Field Act Signed into Law by New York Governor"

1. 1

[grass hopper](#) Says:

Synthetic fertilizer need to be banned from our children's grassed play areas. It just is not needed.

October 29th, 2010 at 7:19 pm

2. 2

[Lorena Fuerst](#) Says:

This is absolutely the best news I've heard all day. I'll be printing it out to show our local school board. Maybe Michigan will be next..

May 24th, 2011 at 9:26 pm

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