

The ARC of Washington

Public Hearing Testimony:

My name is Diana Stadden. I'm with The ARC of Washington State. We have been advocating for children and adults with developmental disabilities since 1936. I am the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator there. I have been working with the Toxic Free Legacy Coalition for the last five years or so since The ARC became aware of the effect of toxic chemicals in our environment, and particularly in children's products.

Disabilities are a natural part of life and, though individuals with developmental disabilities are typically cared for by their families, there's no denying that chemicals can cause or exacerbate developmental delays. I have a son with autism. That's been related to a lot of chemical concerns, and in our environment as well. And I wouldn't have him not be autistic; I love him the way he is, but I want him to be able to reach his full potential. Research shows that there is a direct correlation between exposure to toxic chemicals and developmental disabilities. So the Arc is pleased that the Department of Ecology is adding 21 chemicals, including several flame retardants which we've worked a lot on the last few years and the hormone disrupting phthalates, to the Chemicals of High Concern to Children list.

PFOA has been proposed, and as the last speaker said, you know, there are other pieces that can turn into PFOA. It's been detected in the blood of more than 98% of the general US population. So, that and the three phthalate chemicals that have been requested to be proposed to be added, there are some other ones as well that we have learned that also need to be added because of the effects they have on the developmental system of children.

So, both children and adults with developmental disabilities tend to have weakened immune systems, so they're often more susceptible than the general public to what is in their environment, whether it's toys or clothing or furniture, whatever it may be. They're going to be much more susceptible to the effects of that. We believe every child has ... they have ... they should be allowed to develop to their full potential. And toxic chemicals reduce that potential. So we fully support giving children the right to develop and grow to become the person they were meant to be by removing the harmful chemicals that can cause injury to their systems and to their developing minds and bodies. Thank you very much.