

I am a mother of four young children in West Hartford, Connecticut. My family spends a lot of time outdoors - running, walking, biking, "scooting". It is a rare day in the spring, summer or autumn that we do not either pass a bright yellow lawn pesticide warning sign or just as likely we encounter the smell of the actual pesticide spray and quickly spot the offending landscape truck. It is one thing to endure this in my neighborhood but it is upsetting on a whole new level to encounter these signs at my town parks and schools, which are designated 'safe' places to play.

I completely support and appreciate the ban on pesticides in schools, parks and athletic fields. These places need to be safe for our children and where we risk exposure to pesticides, including insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides, our children not safe.

Here are several reasons why:

- *Pesticides do not discriminate, they are designed to kill living things and are not smart enough to target the exact bug or weed in your yard. They are designed to cut a wide swath.

- *children are the most vulnerable to lawn chemicals due to the nature of their rapid development and growth as well as their more direct physical exposure. One does not need to eat grass to experience the dangers of pesticides, most damage occurs through absorption via the skin.

- *The use of pesticides, including herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers on our lawns has been linked to a huge variety of illnesses including cancers, ADHD, asthma, infertility, the list goes on. What's more, the chemicals can remain on the grass long after the pesticide sign can be removed.

- *Sadly, though these chemicals are available at your local garden center you should not assume they are safe for you and your children and no matter what you read on the label there is no guaranteed safe way to apply these chemicals. Testing on the effects of these chemicals is extremely limited and not done by independent labs.

Luckily, natural alternatives exist! Natural fertilizers are slow release and actually work better and longer. Synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are expensive and a large percentage wash away into our watersheds and drinking water supplies. Nurturing the soil naturally by aerating or adding compost means eventually, pesticide free lawns require fewer resources and less maintenance. We cannot kill almost every living organism on a patch of land and call it safe.

Please continue the ban on pesticides on school grounds, parks and athletic fields.

Thank you for your time,

Kim Hughes
West Hartford, CT