



## Center for Health, Environment & Justice

### PRESS RELEASE

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### **Autism Linked to Vinyl Flooring in Homes and Schools**

#### *CHEJ Launches New Campaign to Rid Schools of Toxic Flooring*

**Falls Church, VA** – The scientific community is abuzz over a first of its kind study published in the journal *Neurotoxicology* that found a statistically significant correlation between Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC or vinyl) flooring. The study found that children who live in homes with vinyl floors, which can emit phthalates, are twice as likely to have autism. This is the first study to link PVC flooring with autism spectrum disorder, and adds to a growing body of scientific evidence linking phthalates in PVC flooring with asthma and other respiratory problems in children and adults. The study focused on vinyl flooring in the home but children are routinely exposed to this toxic material in their schools as well.

The Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ), a leader in the movement to reduce PVC in consumer products, is launching a new campaign to eradicate the use of toxic vinyl flooring in our nation's schools.

"A number of studies have found a correlation between phthalates found in PVC flooring and asthma. Now for the first time – scientific researchers found a connection between phthalates in PVC flooring and autism. While phthalates have been banned in children's toys, they're commonly found in PVC building materials in schools. This new study underscores the need for school districts coast to coast to use healthier PVC-free flooring materials when renovating and building new schools. In light of the growing evidence that PVC is toxic from production to disposal, we're launching a new campaign to encourage schools to use PVC-free flooring and other building materials," **says Michael Schade, CHEJ's PVC Campaign Coordinator**

This is not the first study that found PVC flooring and building materials may be toxic to our health and linked to asthma:

- A 2008 study found an association between concentrations of phthalates in indoor dust and wheezing among preschool children. The presence of PVC flooring in the child's bedroom was the strongest predictor of respiratory ailments.
- A study of 10,851 children found the presence of floor moisture and PVC significantly increased the risk of asthma.

- A study among personnel in four geriatric hospitals found asthma symptoms were more common in the two buildings with signs of phthalate degradation in PVC flooring.
- A study of workers in an office building found they were diagnosed with adult-onset asthma at a rate of about 16 times higher than expected. The researchers identified PVC flooring as the source of chemicals in the air.
- A study of adults working in rooms with plastic wall covering materials were more than twice as likely to develop asthma.

An average of one out of every 13 school-age children has asthma. In fact, asthma is a leading cause of school absenteeism: 14.7 million school days are missed each year due to asthma.

CHEJ has successfully worked with Johnson & Johnson, Target, Sears Holdings, Microsoft and other companies to develop PVC phase-out plans and has helped enact state and federal legislation to ban lead and phthalates in kids' toys.

**To access the study visit:** [http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?\\_ob=ArticleURL&\\_udi=B6W81-4VK6N5N-3&\\_user=10&\\_coverDate=02%2F10%2F2009&\\_rdoc=21&\\_fmt=high&\\_orig=browse&\\_srch=doc-info\(%23toc%236641%239999%23999999999%2399999%23FLA%23display%23Articles\)&\\_cdi=6641&\\_sort=d&\\_docanchor=&\\_ct=27&\\_acct=C000050221&\\_version=1&\\_urlVersion=0&\\_userid=10&md5=e9c2b54748a2319f39e490ff39740caf](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6W81-4VK6N5N-3&_user=10&_coverDate=02%2F10%2F2009&_rdoc=21&_fmt=high&_orig=browse&_srch=doc-info(%23toc%236641%239999%23999999999%2399999%23FLA%23display%23Articles)&_cdi=6641&_sort=d&_docanchor=&_ct=27&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=e9c2b54748a2319f39e490ff39740caf)