



Learning
Disabilities
Association
of Michigan



Testimony in Support of the 2021 Lead Bill Package
Submitted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan
for December 9, 2021

Thank you, Chair Kahle, Majority Vice Chair Meerman, Minority Vice Chair Witwer, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to share our support of HBs 5413-5421 and HB 5423.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan (LDA-MI) is a statewide, non-profit organization of individuals with specific learning disabilities and attention disabilities, and the families and the professionals who support them. LDA-MI provides education and support to families of children with learning disabilities and adults with learning disabilities.

The incidence of these types of disabilities is rising every year at an alarming pace. Approximately 17% of children in the United States have a developmental disabilityⁱ. The CDC now estimates that 1 in 44 children in the United States have an autism spectrum disorderⁱⁱ. The National Academy of Sciences Committee on Developmental Toxicology, estimates that at least 28% of developmental defects are caused in whole or part by environmental exposures to toxic chemicalsⁱⁱⁱ. **When it comes to chemicals, lead has one of the strongest links to neurological harm.** In fact, everyone agrees that there is NO SAFE LEVEL of lead exposure for children.

Exposure to lead can cause neurological damage leading to learning disabilities, lowered IQs, and behavioral problems. **Recent studies show that learning and behavior deficits occur in children even at very low levels of lead exposure, and that these deficits persist.** In addition to learning disabilities, lead exposure can cause intellectual impairment, ADHD, and behavior problems. Scientists also link low levels of lead exposure in toddlers to declines in math and reading test scores when the children reach elementary school.

This school year, just over 200,000 students receive special education services in Michigan^{iv}. 27.1% of those children are identified as having a specific learning disability and thousands more have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). We have known for years it is not enough to test children for lead, we need to eliminate the source of the exposure. **Eliminating exposures reduces costs for healthcare, special education, and other areas related to treating short-term and long-term effects from lead poisoning which is good for children and for our state.**

Michigan should lead the way to preventing exposures to lead. HBs 5413-5421 and HB 5423 are strong steps in that direction. Thank you for your consideration of these bills and please don't hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.



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Sincerely,

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ⁱ Center for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/features/increase-in-developmental-disabilities.html>

ⁱⁱ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Scientific Frontiers in Developmental Toxicology and Risk Assessment, Executive Summary, http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=9871&page=1, National Academy of Sciences Committee on Developmental Toxicology.

^{iv} [MI School Data](#) Special Education Programs Data Portraits Overview, 2020-2021 School Year