

# CHILD SAFETY BLOG

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## Lead Poisoning Still a Reality for Children Today

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Since lead paint was banned in 1978, the number of children with elevated lead levels has decreased so much that at one point, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was confident that this environmental hazard would be eliminated by 2010. However, health officials no longer think they can meet that goal this year because lead hazards are still present in houses built before the lead paint ban, many of which are in “poor urban pockets,” says [Mireya Navarro of the New York Times](#).

Although the 1978 law banned the use of lead paint, local laws and enforcement have yet to catch up with their own laws requiring inspections and cleanup of houses built before 1978. Dr. Mary Jean Brown, chief of the lead poisoning prevention branch at the CDC, said that there are still jurisdictions that do not have laws requiring landlords to check for lead-based paint. Even in places that do have

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such laws, landlords are not always compliant – in a survey done from 2007 to 2009 in Brooklyn, New York, “59 percent of tenants reported that their landlords had not followed any of the law’s provisions,” Navarro reported in the NY Times article.

In addition to experts’ recommendation of strengthening local laws and enforcement, the EPA implemented a regulation in April, 2010, that “requires renovation and remodeling contractors to be certified in techniques for containing lead dust stirred up during work” in buildings constructed before 1978.

Elevated lead levels in young children, especially those under 6, can “cause irreversible impairment intelligence quotient, motor skills and behavior,” says Dr. John Rosen, who founded a lead prevention program at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx.

In Washington, D.C., lead safety laws impose strict liability on landlords who know they are renting to families with children under eight years old. However, many landlords still are lax about cleaning up apartments unless families complain loud and often. In our [law firm's work](#) in representing such families, we find that landlords don't take their obligations seriously until they are taken to court.

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