

"PCBs haven't been manufactured for a long time, but they remain in older buildings in many forms. Moreover they are very dangerous compounds, causing cancer, reducing immune system function and altering hormonal systems. However the most dangerous effects of PCBs, in my opinion, is that they have a very damaging effect on the brain of children when they are exposed either before birth and when they are young and the brain is still developing. PCBs do the same things that exposure to lead does, causing a reduction of IQ by some 5-7 IQ point, a shortened attention span and an increase in disruptive behavior. The reduction in IQ appears to occur irregardless of what a child's IQ would have been without exposure, so it affects the very bright equally as much as the less bright child. Everyone knows about the dangers of lead, but few are aware of the hazards of PCBs. Unfortunately most evidence indicates that these effects of brain functioning after exposure early in life are irreversible. PCBs in window caulking in schools, with subsequent contamination of the soils around schools, is an open invitation for exposure to children. The "dumbing down" of children is tragic, especially if it occurs at a site supposedly devoted to learning. We need to identify and remove PCBs wherever they are found, especially in and around school buildings."

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Dr. Carpenter is one of the authors of the well known 2004 study: A Global Assessment of Organic Contaminants in Farmed vs. Wild Salmon: Geographical Differences and Health Risks