

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 2

AUGUST 2007  
FREE

# BATON ROUGE **Parents** M A Z I N E

18 Years of Connecting With Families  
[www.brparents.com](http://www.brparents.com)

## Adding **Girls** to the Science & Math **Equation**

## Back to School Lists

What one item could be  
harmful to your child?

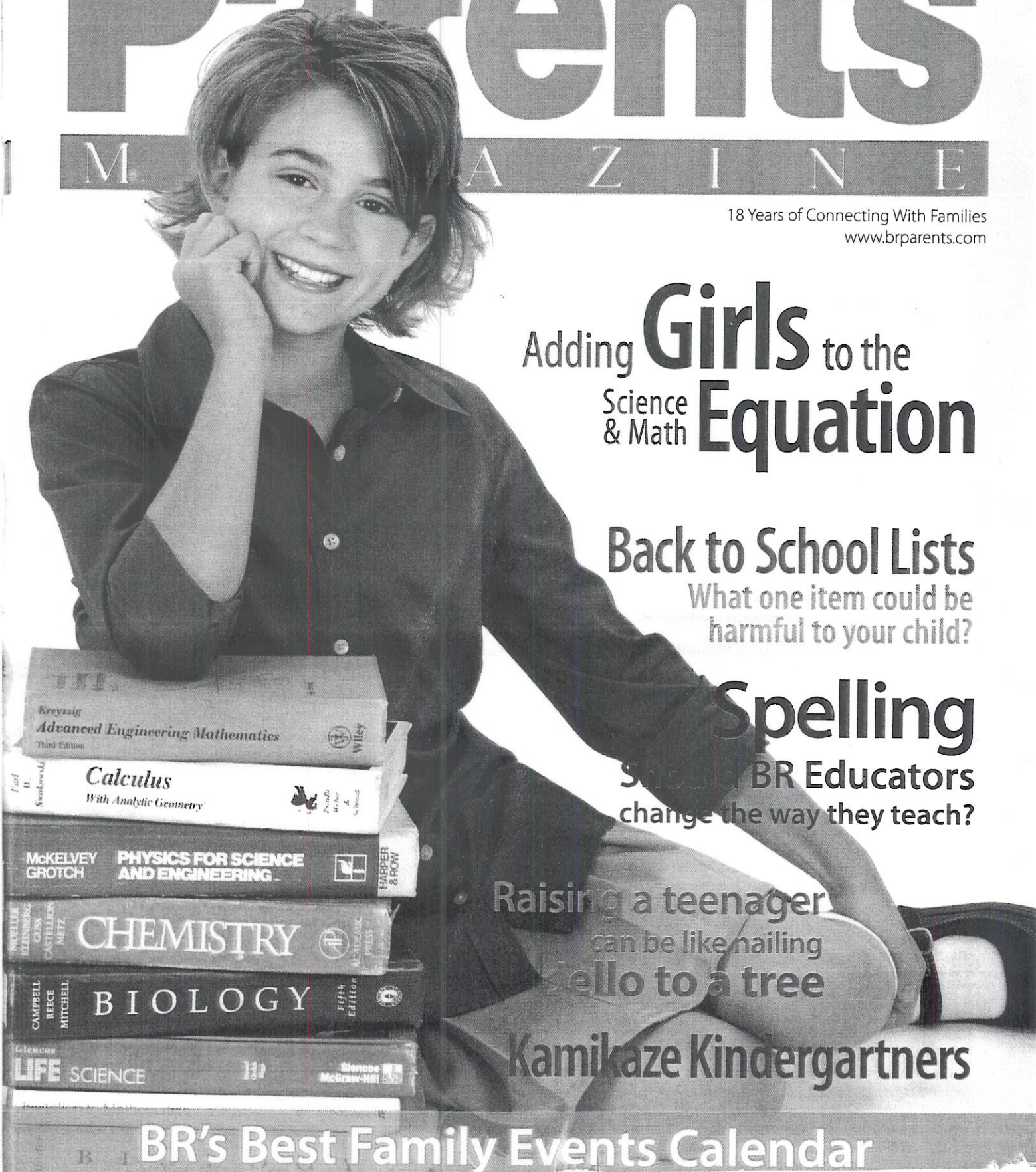
## Spelling

Should BR Educators  
change the way they teach?

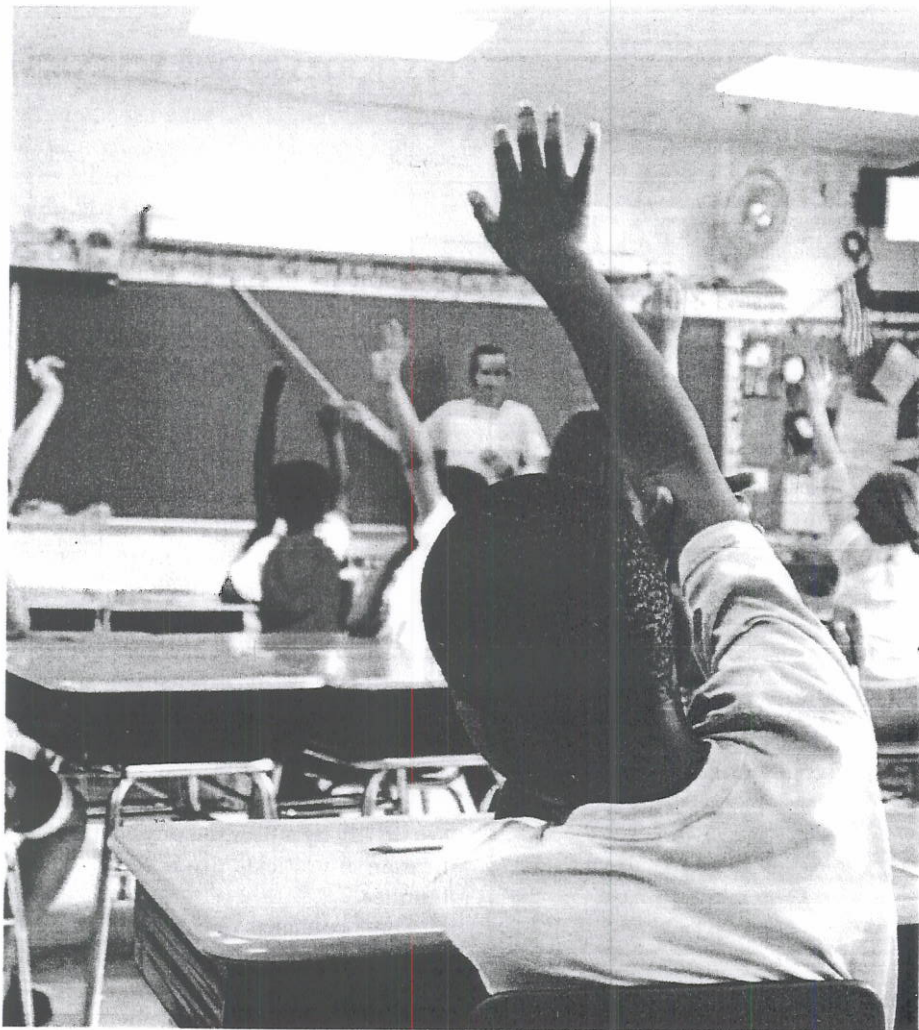
Raising a teenager  
can be like nailing  
**Sello to a tree**

## Kamikaze Kindergartners

## BR's Best Family Events Calendar







## Pesticides in Our Schools

Are Our Children Safe?

BY STEPHANIE KRAFT

A parish truck sprays around a neighborhood school to kill mosquitoes.

Inside that school a private company treats floorboards and walls to prevent roaches.

Two weeks later a student starts exhibiting asthmatic-like wheezing and skin irritation from pesticide exposure.

Such incidents of pesticide induced illnesses are rare. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Environmental Protection Agency only 7.4 children out of every million got sick from exposure to pesticides. In a study that was conducted from 1998-2002, there were no fatalities caused by exposure to pesticides, and only 0.1% of the injuries to school children were rated as "very severe".

Even so, local and federal governments have taken measures to further

protect school children from exposure to pesticides and other chemicals used to control insects and rodents.

Louisiana requires that schools only allow certified commercial applicators to apply pesticides.

Pesticides may only be applied to school buildings or on school grounds when students are not expected to be present for normal academic instruction or organized extracurricular activity for at least eight hours after the application. While this falls short of the 24 hour period that sites such as [www.beyondpesticides.org](http://www.beyondpesticides.org) recommend, Louisiana is one of only 33 states that have such requirements in place.

Aerial pesticide applications, except for aerial mosquito control applications, are not allowed within 1,000 feet of any

Continued on page 80

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## PESTICIDES IN OUR SCHOOLS

Continued from page 79

school grounds during normal school hours.

In addition the Louisiana Pesticide Law requires that each school's governing authority to prepare and submit an annual integrated pest management plan (IPM) that focuses on using the least toxic effective methods of general pest control in, on, or around school structures and grounds. Among other things this IPM must list the pesticides that will be used, as well as the location and means of applications.

This IPM must be available for review by the general public in the business office of each school during regular school hours. Schools are also required to maintain a hypersensitive student registry. This list includes students whose parents have submitted a written statement to the school and included a written medical verification of pesticide sensitivity by a licensed physician. Notification of pesticide use is sent to these families.

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry enforces regulations concerning school pesticide safety in all public and private elementary and secondary schools (K-12) in Louisiana.

Two students at Mandeville Jr. High School were exposed to Green Thumb Wasp and Hornet Killer (tetramethrin, phenothrin) sprayed by a teacher in a practice room for the school band in an effort to kill ants. One parent filed a health complaint expressing concern about possible health effects, though no symptoms were reported at the time. The spraying was reportedly done in violation of the district's pest management program. The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry issued a warning letter to the district citing several violations of state pesticide law, including applying a pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its labeling, allowing a person to apply pesticides who was not a certified applicator, not keeping a record of the application, and applying a pesticide in a school while children were present or expected to be present within eight hours.

School districts often take action independent of state agencies when a pesticide misuse occurs. In August 1994, Assumption Parish school officials closed Pierre Part middle and pri-



many schools after a misapplication of a flea pesticide containing the active ingredient Lindane. Although the chemical is not supposed to be used indoors, the school custodian sprayed the pesticide in 14 temporary classrooms. A few parents reported medical complaints. The Lindane that was purchased by the school was not registered in the state. Also, the operator of the pesticide was required to be licensed, when he was not.

While Louisiana is one of the 33 states that have taken protective action to address pesticide use around school-children, organizations such as Beyond Pesticides ([www.beyondpesticides.org](http://www.beyondpesticides.org)) and NCAP (<http://www.pesticide.org/>) are pushing for more uniform federal regulations. These include measures not in place in Louisiana such as requiring posting notification signs at schools 72 hours prior to indoor and outdoor pesticide application.

Because children spend so many hours in school each week, limiting their exposure to pesticides at school is important. Be informed. Talk to your child's school administrators about their pest management policies and use of disinfectants. Request a copy of the IPM.

You should also be on the lookout for symptoms of illness from pesticide exposure, such as:

- Respiratory symptoms, such as cough, wheezing, and chest tightness
- Gastrointestinal symptoms, such as vomiting, nausea, and diarrhea
- Nervous system symptoms, such as headache, blurred vision, and dizziness
- Eye irritation and pain
- Skin redness and swelling

Talk to your child's doctor if you have any concerns about pesticide exposure.


If you feel that your child's school has violated the Louisiana Pesticide Law, contact the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry at (225) 925-3770. *BRPM*

**Tell them you saw their ad in  
Baton Rouge Parents Magazine**

## BALLET MODERN PILATES MAT TAP • JAZZ

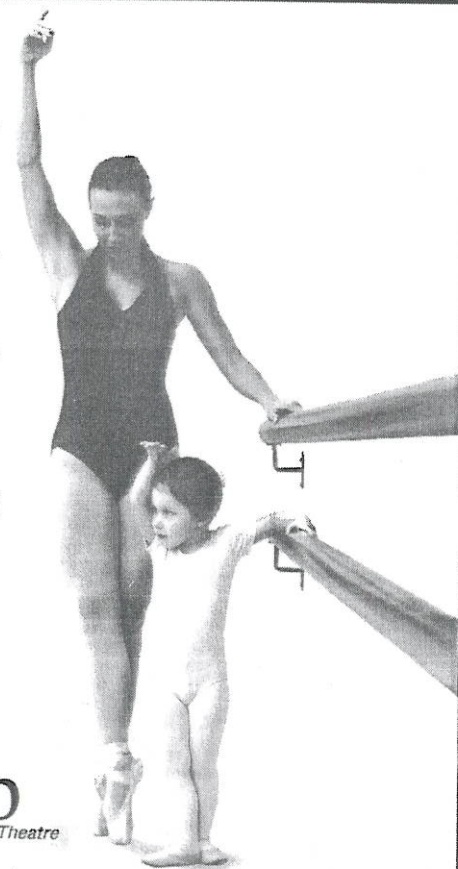
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