The CDC lowered the blood level limit for young children in 2012 to 5 µg/dL from 10 µg/dL. The limit was lowered because no amount of lead has been determined to be safe for young children and less lead is always better. The new limit of 5 µg/dL was based on lead levels in the 2.5% of children with the highest levels. It was a way to target the children most at risk and it marked a shift towards a more prevention based approach.

The alarming headlines may not tell the whole story. Here are some other facts that help put the issue of lead exposure in historical context - an estimated 88% of children aged 1 to 5 had blood lead levels at or above 10 mcg/dL from 1976 to 1980, from 1991-1994 it was 4.4%, from 1999-2002 it was 1.6% and it dropped to 0.8% in 2007-2010. Lead exposure is a still an issue, but it’s an issue that has been drastically improved.