

## Traffic fumes are still damaging children's brains

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Removing lead from petrol was supposed to prevent damage to children's mental development. Now it seems that traffic fumes may still be impairing their learning - because of the [soot particles](#) it contains.

When Shakira Franco Suglia at Harvard University and her colleagues studied 200 children in nearby Boston they found that scores on verbal reasoning, visual learning and other tests were lower in those exposed to more traffic fumes. The IQ of children from areas of the city with above-average pollution levels was 3 points below those in cleaner areas, even after controlling for socio-economic factors (*American Journal of Epidemiology*, DOI: [10.1093/aje/kwm308](https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwm308)).

That puts the impact of soot on a par with lead and other toxic substances that damage brain development, says Franco Suglia.

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg19726371.000-traffic-fumes-are-still-damaging-childrens-brains.html>