

## The Fuss Over Baby Formula

(NAPSA)—Dr. William Sears, well-known pediatrician, father of eight and author of 30 books on child development, says it's time to stop the formula wars. He says the escalating marketing war between the makers of infant formula are confusing pediatricians and creating unnecessary worry and anxiety for parents across the country.

The latest skirmish in the formula wars is in Federal Court, where a judge issued a temporary restraining order against Mead Johnson, the maker of Enfamil, to stop it from distributing false information about “store brand formula”—the lower-cost alternatives sold by Wal-Mart, Kmart, Target, Kroger, Albertson's, CVS and other major retailers under their own names.

Dr. Sears says there are two major problems with the escalating formula war.

“First, formula companies do not advance the benefits of breastfeeding, and if they do, it's just lip service,” says Dr. Sears. “Second, formula companies have gone too far in trying to claim product superiority for their own commercial advantage.”

Dr. Sears says breastfeeding is best for babies. However, when parents need to turn to infant formula, they should know that the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates infant formula under the Infant Formula Act, the law which ensures that all formulas meet minimum, and in some cases maximum, ingredient levels.

Dr. Sears says that, by law, parents have the assurance that they can walk into any store in the country, pick up any can of



infant formula, and know that it contains all the nutrition a healthy baby needs.

From his 30-year perspective, Dr. Sears says the only significant difference among the various term infant formulas sold in the United States is price. Since that can range from \$13 to \$25 a week, the difference is significant.

Infant formula is a \$3.1 billion business in the United States. Parents spend an average of \$1,200 a year on the two national brands of formula, which is half the total cost of raising a baby during the first year. Store brand formulas sell for up to 40 percent less than the major infant formula brands, saving parents up to \$500 a year.

“We need parents to be able to breastfeed longer, and if necessary, help them make educated choices on their formula options,” says Dr. Sears.