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Choosing Safe Toys





In the last year, millions and millions of toys have been recalled from across North America. Unfortunately, these toys have had higher than allowed levels of deadly ingredients, or small parts posing choking hazards. The American Academy of Pediatrics has a list of hazardous toys at www.aap.org.

With the gift giving season upon us, how can you be sure you are buying a toy that won't harm the recipient?

1. Check that stuffed animals have sewed on facial features. Many stores like IKEA only sell animals without plastic noses and eyes. Pull on that nose to make sure it won't come off. Ensure all items are tightly secured. The last thing you want is to have your gift cause a trip to the hospital.
2. Visit www.SongsThatTeach.com to find educational audio kits that will teach your child at any age. For babies, try the award-winning *Lullabies from Around the World*. The Parents' Choice Award Winner boosts babies' intelligence with lullabies in eleven different languages.
3. Look for toys promoting lead-free paint. Recently a toy-making powerhouse recalled millions of toys in three separate recalls over a four month period. Toy manufacturers are now taking the extra step of changing their packaging to reflect their new standards.
4. Art supplies should be non-toxic. That includes paints, crayons, and glue.
5. If your little commando insists on having a g-u-n, make sure that it is brightly colored. Reports have been made of children being arrested or hurt when police thought they were carrying a real weapon. It might not be as cool as an identical look-alike, but it could very well keep them out of harm's way. Ironic, isn't it?
6. Make sure that in-line skates, skateboards, and bikes are only used when your child is wearing a helmet. Get them into the habit. Buying elbow and knee pads will cut down on bumps and scrapes. Wrist supports are also a good idea. As children fall, they will put their hands out in front. Nothing smarter more than a cut up hand.
7. Be aware of video game ratings by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB). These ratings go for movies, too.



-  Early Childhood (suitable for 3+)

-  Everyone (6+)
-  Everyone (10+)
-  Teen (13+)
-  Mature (17+)

For more information: www.esrb.org/ratings/ratings_guide.jsp

8. Consider the age of child when buying toys that shoot darts or other flying objects. Teach your child to never aim at another person's face. Make sure that ends are covered with a blunt sponge or suction cup.
9. Note the loudness of toys with sirens, voices, or other audio features. In America, the decibel levels are much higher than in the UK. Children can put their hearing at risk with loud toys, especially when they place the toy close to their ears.
10. Goo and reaction toys are bigger than ever. Ensure that slime and any chemical reaction is non-toxic, that there is no risk of fire, and that electrical elements stay away from fabric.

And, when they are all done with their toys, teach your child to put them away. This will prevent tripping hazards and broken toys.

Page 2 of 2

Sara Jordan is available for an interview. Please contact media@sara-jordan.com. Sara Jordan has been a composer and educator for over 25 years. Sara Jordan Publishing has produced an impressive array of award-winning educational programs. Over 60 educational audio programs and resource books teach Math, Phonics, Health and Social Studies. Due to worldwide requests from parents and teachers alike, most of her titles are now available in English, Spanish, and French. Visit www.songsthatteach.com.

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