

# Toy Safety 101

## Choosing the Best Gifts for the Children in Your Life



Presented by [www.RecalledToyAlert.com](http://www.RecalledToyAlert.com)

Toy Safety 101

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# Introduction

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Toys are an important part of childhood, helping children learn and develop, as well as entertaining them. Unfortunately, some toys can be dangerous. Poorly constructed toys or toys that are inappropriate for your child's age and level of development can lead to tragic results.

This book is a guide to help you select safe toys for your child. There are many types of toys on the market, so it isn't possible to comment on them all individually. This book covers the more common toys available and details some of the hazards for kids.

Safety and age appropriateness are important considerations when selecting a toy for your child.

When selecting toys for your child, keep these safety precautions in mind:

- 🎁 Read labels and packaging. Look for and follow the age recommendations and instructions about proper assembly, use and supervision.
- 🎁 Toys that have small parts or small objects such as coins, magnets, batteries and nails should not be given to children under three years of age.
- 🎁 Jewelry should not be given to children under three years of age.
- 🎁 Choose sturdy and well made toys that can stand up to being bitten, tugged, sucked, jumped on and thrown around without falling apart.
- 🎁 Check for sharp edges or rough surfaces that could injure your child.
- 🎁 Ensure paint and fillings are lead-free and non-toxic.



## Play Safe



Carefully selecting toys is not enough—supervising your child’s play and providing them with a safe area to play in can be the best ways to protect your child from harm. It is always best to explain and demonstrate to your child the correct and safe use of a toy when first giving it to them. You can improve the safety of the play area in your home by:

- 📦 Removing and immediately discarding packaging before giving a toy to a small child.
- 📦 Ensuring older children’s toys are out of reach of younger children.
- 📦 Checking toys for breakage or potential hazards such as a loose part that could be a choking hazard.
- 📦 Never giving un-inflated balloons to small children and removing burst balloons from their play area as they can cause choking.
- 📦 Removing ‘dead’ batteries in toys, as they can leak poisons or liquid that can damage skin or eyes.

### Making Your Own Toys

Consider the appropriateness of the toy for your child’s age and developmental level. Make the toy safe for use by:

- 📦 Using non-toxic paints, glue and other finishes, and always washing fabrics to remove any toxic coating.
- 📦 Ensuring the materials used are not flammable—especially doll’s hair, clothing and accessories.

It is also important that the toy is well made and sturdy enough to withstand playtime activity. Therefore:

- 📦 Seams should be strong so that the filling can’t escape.
- 📦 All small pieces should be securely fastened to the toy so they cannot be easily pulled off and become a choking danger.
- 📦 Wooden toys should be sanded smooth with no sharp edges, and preferably made from soft wood that is unlikely to splinter.

### Liquid in Toys

Toys that contain liquid include rolling balls, doll baby bottles, children’s tumblers, necklaces, pens, paperweights, key chains and liquid timers.

**Discard any toy if the  
content leaks.**

If the liquid is not identified on a label as safe and you suspect that it could be a harmful chemical substance, the toy could be dangerous for your child if they bite into or puncture it.

### Noisy toys

Be wary of toys that make loud noises as they can harm your child's hearing. Babies are more sensitive to loud noises than older children. Be particularly careful of toys that make a loud noise when held close to their ear such as toy telephones with a speaker in the earpiece.

Impulsive sounds like that from a cap gun or noise from a continuous siren can also be a hearing hazard for your child.

## Storing Toys Safely

Toy boxes are useful for storing toys and helping keep bedrooms tidy, but they can be dangerous. Young children have died from being struck by a heavy toy box lid as they peered inside the toy box. Some children have also been trapped inside toy boxes and been unable to lift the lid. If your toy box has a heavy lid, think about removing it for the safety of your child.

If you are considering buying a toy box:

- 📦 Look for one without a lid—if you choose a toy box with a lid, the lid should be lightweight and removable.
- 📦 If there is a lock on a toy box lid, make sure it is easy for a child to open from the inside.
- 📦 Make sure the toy box has ventilation holes to prevent a child suffocating should they climb inside and the lid closes.
- 📦 Make sure the toy box lid has rubber or other stoppers that allow a gap of .5" or more when the lid is closed so that small fingers can't be crushed, and to help provide ventilation.

## Toys for Kids 0-3 Years

Children under three-years old often place toys in their mouth to explore them by sucking and chewing on them. Children in this age group are especially vulnerable to choking on small objects.



**Keep small objects out of reach of young children and always supervise their play time.**

Toys suitable for children aged up to three years must comply with the mandatory Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) safety standard 'Toys for children up to and including 36 months of age'. This means that, by law, toys suitable for ages up to 36 months (not just those marked as such) must not contain any parts and must not produce any small parts during normal use that could fit inside a 35mm film canister, as they may be a choking hazard. Any object that is small enough to fit inside a 35mm film canister could choke or be swallowed or inhaled by a child under three years old.

Examples of the toys suitable for children under three years of age are:

- 🎁 Toys to be grasped, shaken or rattled by small hands.
- 🎁 Simple action toys for surprise or identifying sounds or pictures.
- 🎁 Toys, including books, for recognizing basic letters and numbers.
- 🎁 Toys for sorting large shapes that do not need finger dexterity.

## Toys for Baby



### Before You Buy

#### Rattles and Soothers

- 🎁 Rattles and soothers must be large enough that babies can't fit them completely into their mouths as this would be a choking hazard. Small ends (such as the rattle handle) must not fit into a 2" x 1.5" hole, or if round must not fit into a 1.75" diameter hole.
- 🎁 Never tie a soother or dummy around a baby's neck as it could strangle them.
- 🎁 Rattles and other hand-held noise-producing toys should not be noisier than a loud conversation in a room.

#### Toys on a String or Elastic Cord

- 🎁 When a toy is attached to a string, the free length of the string should be shorter than 9" so that the string is not a strangulation hazard.
- 🎁 When a toy has an elastic cord to be attached across a cradle, cot or stroller, the maximum stretched length of the elastic should be no more than 28" and the length of the elastic when

relaxed should be no greater than 22". The elastic may be enclosed in a tube.

The toy should display this warning label:

**WARNING: This toy should be removed from the cradle, cot, playpen, stroller etc. when the child is able to sit up unaided, because there is a possibility that the child could fall forward onto the toy in a way that would cause a restriction to breathing.**

#### Self Retracting Pull-Strings

- 🎁 The last 2" of any pull-string on toys for children younger than 18 months should stay outside the toy when the string is fully retracted so the child's fingers do not get caught.

#### Detachable Parts

- 🎁 The detachable parts of toys intended for small children should not be small enough to be poked into the mouth, nose or ears. Smaller parts like eyes and buttons must be firmly attached to the toy.

### Battery Operated Toys

- ❗ Mobiles, musical toys and night lights for children should have any batteries securely enclosed—the battery casing should only be able to be opened with a specific tool.

### Electric Toys and Appliances

- ❗ Toys that operate on electricity, or appliances like night lights connected to the power supply by flexible electric cords, should be completely sealed or enclosed at the point where the power enters the toys.



## Stuffed Toys

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Stuffed toys like teddy bears and cuddly dolls may seem harmless, but their eyes, nose, hair, buttons or attached jewelry are often small enough to choke small children. Check that all small parts and attachments cannot be easily removed.

### Before You Buy

- ❗ The filling of stuffed toys should be clean and free of objects or substances that may be harmful to a child.
- ❗ If possible, feel the toy for any sharp objects.
- ❗ Toys made from foam such as bath blocks may pose a choking danger if a child bites pieces off it. Foam toys are not recommended for children under three years.
- ❗ Only buy bean-bag style toys if you are sure the seams or material will not tear to allow the beans to escape.

- ❗ Polystyrene beads can be particularly hazardous as young children might inhale them.
- ❗ Seams should be securely sewn. If seams are sewn with a synthetic material like nylon thread, check the ends of the thread are secure.
- ❗ Check that all parts and small attachments like hair, jewelry and eyes cannot be easily removed from the toy.

### Safety at Home

- ❗ Never let a child younger than three play with toys that have small parts that could separate and cause choking.
- ❗ Re-sew any split seams or dispose of the toy.
- ❗ Check toys regularly to make sure any accessories or small parts remain securely attached.



## Building Blocks

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Brightly colored toy building blocks and nesting cubes can provide young children with creative and constructive play as they stack and knock down their creations. Beware of sets containing small parts that could choke your child.

### Before You Buy

- ❗ Check that paints and lacquers are non-toxic. Look for a label on a painted toy specifying that the paints are lead-free and non-toxic.

- ❗ Make sure plastic pieces are durable and not brittle. When brittle plastic breaks it can form sharp jagged edges or points that can cut.
- ❗ Select wooden items that are smoothly finished and made from soft wood that is unlikely to splinter when chewed.

### Safety at Home

- ❗ Demonstrate the safe use of building sets to your child.



## Push-Pull Toys

Push-pull toys are ideal for young children when they start to take an active interest in exploring their surroundings and become more mobile. Toys that can be pushed or pulled along include items attached to a cord or a rigid handle such as a walking trolley with blocks or a toy stroller.

### Before You Buy

#### Pull Strings

- ❗ If your child is 18 months or younger, ensure the pull string is shorter than 9". Strings longer than this can tangle and form a loop or noose, and be a strangulation danger.
- ❗ For children aged 18 months to 36 months, cords that are longer than 9" should not have beads or other attachments that could tangle to form a loop or noose.

- ❗ Any string or cord attached to a toy should be at least .25" thick to avoid being a cutting danger for your child.

#### Solid Handles

- ❗ Push-along or pull-along toys with rigid handles should have protective covers firmly attached to the ends of the handle so that the exposed ends can't cut or stab an infant.
- ❗ Removal or loss of a cover should not reveal a sharp point or edge, and the cover must not be small enough to choke a child.
- ❗ Crossbars on handles should be firmly attached to the bar leading from the toy. They should not be attached by nails, as an exposed nail could form a sharp cutting edge.

#### Axles

- ❗ Axles should be properly attached to the toy and the wheels firmly attached to the axles. Removal of a wheel or an axle should not produce a dangerous sharp point.



## Dolls

Children may take an interest in dolls when they begin to play make-believe games. There are many types of dolls available and you should be careful to select a safe one that suits your child's age and development.

## Before You Buy

### Limb Attachment

- For children up to three years, ensure that the doll's limb or head if removable could not fit inside a 35mm film canister so it isn't a choking danger.
- If limbs or heads can be pulled from the doll's body, they should not expose sharp wires inside the body or on the end of the limb or head. Attachment with rubber bands is acceptable if the point of attachment on the limb and/or body is not a sharp screw, nail or hook that will cut fingers poked into the gap.

### Construction Material

- Plastic should be soft and flexible, as brittle plastics can break and form sharp fragments and dangerous small parts.
- Wooden dolls should have smoothly finished surfaces, free of splinters. They should not contain joining nails or screws and the joins should be firmly glued.

### Eyes and Buttons

- Small parts such as eyes and buttons should be securely fixed to the doll or its clothes so they cannot be easily removed by pulling, chewing or washing. Eyes and buttons should be made from non-toxic materials.

### Pins

- Diapers, liners and other clothes designed to be removed from the doll should be secured with velcro, clips or other safe fastening systems, not pins.

## Handbags and Purses

- Decorations, like glitter, sequins or jewelry, on handbags, purses and other fashion accessories should be firmly attached.

## Safety at Home

- Do not give small metal figures to young children. These figures are usually collectors' items and not for children they may contain or be coated with toxic elements like lead paint.
- Do not give children dolls that have exposed and dangerous sharp edges or points.
- Regularly check the doll's clothing for bows, ribbons or other adornments that may become loose, as young children could choke on them.
- Remove any pins attached to the doll's clothes.

## Toy Trains, Cars & Miniature Vehicles



Toy cars and trucks appeal to children of all ages but some, such as kits that require assembly and detailed models with small parts, are unsuitable for young children.

## Before You Buy

### Construction

- Choose toy vehicles that are strong and durable, preferably with large parts.
- Any small parts like internal fittings or moldings including windows, dashboards and steering wheels, should be fixed firmly so they cannot be removed by a child.

### Edges Should Be Smooth

- Wooden vehicles should have smooth surfaces free of splinters. If vehicles are not made from a single piece of wood, the separate pieces should be firmly joined together.
- Glued sections fitted together with dowelling are preferable to using nails or screws that could cut or scratch if the toy breaks apart.
- Plastic vehicles should be molded in one piece and the plastic should be strong enough to withstand rough treatment. The plastic should also be flexible enough not to form sharp or jagged sections if it breaks.
- Metal vehicles should have no sharp edges or corners. Individual parts should be firmly attached, preferably by secure rivets or welding.

### Wheels and Tires

- Wheels and tires should be firmly attached to the vehicle.
- They should not, if removed, expose sharp axle rods, rough metal or splintered wheel rims. Small tires should not be easily removed from the wheels.

## Self-Propelled Vehicles

- These include models with inertia motors, wound by pushing the vehicle along the floor.
- The motor should be fully enclosed with no gaps where fingers or foreign objects can get caught.
- Hand-wound mechanisms, like those on the lifting and lowering mechanisms of cranes, should be enclosed or have gears that cannot trap fingers or catch on clothing.

## Dump Trucks

- Trucks and other vehicles with tilting trays should be constructed so that fingers can't be caught in the tray when it closes. Pieces that open and close should have blunt or rounded edges so fingers aren't caught or cut if the tray closes on them.

## Self-Retracting Strings

- To ensure that the child's fingers do not get caught, check that the string does not retract too quickly and that it leaves at least 2" length outside the toy.

## Towing Strings

- If the string or cord is longer than 9", the toy should not have any slip knots or attachments that could form loop, creating a strangulation hazard. Any string or cord on a pull-along toy for a child under three years should be at least .25" thick, so it is unlikely to cut a child.

## Sharp Edges

- There should not be any sharp points or edges on vehicles that could stab or injure a person hit by the vehicle.

## Masks and Helmets

Any toy that covers your child's face and is held in place by elastic or string ties must have adequate and unobstructed ventilation so that if the child collapses, faints or is injured while wearing the toy, they don't suffocate.

### Before You Buy

- Check that any toy that encloses the whole head allows adequate and unobstructed ventilation.
- Check that the helmet can be easily removed by another person.

### Safety at Home

- If masks are held in place by elastic, teach children not to 'snap' the mask against the wearer's face.



## Erasers and Fridge Magnets

Erasers and refrigerator magnets that look like food are dangerous for children under three years. Some refrigerator magnets come in shapes that look like small fruits and berries, making them attractive to younger children who could mistake them for the real thing. If chewed they could splinter, and if swallowed the magnet could choke a child—or possibly be toxic.

**Keep erasers and fridge magnets out of reach of young children.**

### Safety Alert:

- Choking hazards—being small, they easily fit into a child's mouth but are still large enough to catch in the throat if swallowed.
- Some erasers may contain toxic material.
- Appearance or smell—the shape, color and smell of scented erasers can make them attractive to small children who have trouble distinguishing them from real food.

## Balloons

Balloons are fun to have at parties, but when deflated or burst, they can choke or suffocate young children.

Suffocation or choking can also occur if children suck the rubber into their mouths to make bubbles.

### Balloon-Blowing Kits

Balloon-blowing kits usually comprise a tube of synthetic substance and a straw. By blowing through the straw into a plug of the synthetic substance it expands and forms a balloon.

### Safety at Home

- ❗ Never tie a rubber balloon onto the side of a cot or stroller.
- ❗ Keep balloons out of reach of young children.
- ❗ Ensure any strings attached to balloons are shorter than 9" so they are not a strangulation hazard.
- ❗ Dispose of any burst balloons.



## Kites

Kites are a constant source of fun, skill and wonder for young children, but unfortunately they can deliver an electric shock if they touch power lines.



The line to the kite must not contain any metallic material, for example, a wire or wire-cored rope cannot be used to control the kite.

The reason for restricting metalized plastic materials in kites is not only to avoid electric shock to the user, but also to prevent shorting of power supply if the kite touches two or more power lines.

## Basketball Nets

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Basketball is a popular sport for children and teenagers, and many homes have a basketball net and backboard installed on a brick wall on their garage or above a door. These installations can be dangerous for children as basketball nets installed on home exteriors may not be able to support a player's weight. Fatal and serious injuries have occurred from falling debris such as bricks and guttering after a player held onto the basketball net and the structure collapsed on top of them.

### Safety at Home

- 📦 Do not fix a basketball net and backboard to brickwork unless assessed as safe by a suitably qualified person.
- 📦 Do not use a basketball net and backboard mounted on brickwork unless assessed as safe by a suitably qualified person.
- 📦 Remove unsafe basketball nets and backboards.
- 📦 Ideally, fix the basketball net and backboard to a 'hot dip' galvanized steel post. Hot dipped galvanized steel has a longer life than ordinary galvanized steel, which helps to resist rusting at ground level.
- 📦 Follow the manufacturer's instructions when attaching the basketball net to the backboard, and the backboard to the post.
- 📦 Regularly check the structural soundness of any wall or post that a basketball net and backboard is attached to.
- 📦 Consult a structural engineer if you have any doubt about the safety or stability of the installation.
- 📦 Warn children to never hang or swing on the basketball net.

## Bows and Arrows

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These projectile toys are associated with many injuries to children. Children playing with bows and arrows should always be supervised and should be warned not to aim or fire at or near others.

### Before You Buy

The shafts of arrows or similar toys should either have:

- 📦 A permanently attached protective tip.
- 📦 A blunted front end to which a protective tip can be attached.

Protective tips should:

- 📦 Be firmly attached to the shaft.
- 📦 Not form a dangerous sharp edge or point.

Preferably, choose a bow that cannot launch improvised projectiles such as pencils or other items that could be fashioned into a dangerous 'arrow'.

### Safety at home

- 📦 Never allow children to play with adult darts.
- 📦 Always supervise children playing with bows and arrows and tell them not to aim fire at or near people or animals.
- 📦 Keep souvenir bows, arrows and spears out of young children's reach.

# Toy Guns and Water Pistols

Toy guns can be dangerous, particularly if they have been adapted to fire 'modified' missiles such as pens, pins or ball bearings. A toy gun should have a barrel plug or be designed to prevent the use of such missiles. Children should always be supervised when using toy guns and should never be allowed to aim or fire them close to another person's face.

Always supervise children playing with toy guns and tell them to never fire a toy gun near a person's face.

## Before You Buy

### Spark Guns

- Check that sparks stay inside the gun when operated.
- Avoid guns that discharge sparks or tiny hot particles, which could hit eyes and cause injury.

### Roll Caps

- These are small strips of rolled paper with tiny dots of explosive powder spaced along their length. They unroll as the caps are fired by a trigger-operated hammer and lever mechanism.
- Avoid guns that discharge the cap near the outside of the gun and from which material from the fired cap may be thrown off into the face of the user or anyone standing nearby.

### Ring Caps

- These are tiny plastic percussion caps containing explosive material, most commonly made in a circular molding that are contained and fired in a revolving cylinder inside the gun.
- Beware of any ring cap guns that have hollow short plastic barrels or plugs in the end of hollow non-metal barrels. This design, combined with rapid and repeated firing of caps, may cause hollow plastic barrels to flare-up or possibly catch fire. To avoid this problem, buy either metal toy guns or those with solid barrels. Be aware of where a cap gun with a solid barrel will emit its blast so that injuries from its emissions can be avoided.

### Cork Guns

- Toy guns that shoot corks from the barrel often use a compressed air system for firing. Each cork should be securely attached to the gun by a strong cord.

### Water pistols and water guns

- A water pistol with a range of only a yard or two is not considered dangerous, provided only water is used.
- Water guns or cannons that work on manual compression and have a range of 10 yards or more can be dangerous.

### Safety at home

- 📦 High pressure water guns must not be fired at close range to another person as the high compression stream of water from the gun can cause serious eye or ear injuries.
- 📦 Cap guns should not be fired near the face, eyes or ears.
- 📦 Make sure children understand the safe use instructions supplied with toy guns.



## Flying Planes

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Because toy planes may not fly where intended, and uncontrolled flight paths may cause problems, a child's competence and level of responsibility should be the deciding factors in buying this type of toy. Propellers should be designed in the form of a ring to reduce the risk of injury.

### Before You Buy

#### Inertia motor planes

Inertia motor planes operate when the motor is wound by pushing the plane's wheels along a surface. The propeller spins when the plane is released or a bar or button is pushed. Be careful that:

- 📦 The propeller has no sharp edges or sharp points
- 📦 The motor mechanism is enclosed so that fingers cannot be inserted into the working parts.

#### Key-wound motors

The same hazards mentioned for inertia motor planes apply to planes with key-wound motors. You should also check that:

- 📦 There is less than .25" between the key and the toy so that fingers cannot be caught.
- 📦 The wings of the key do not have holes greater than .25" diameter, as larger holes can trap fingers when the key is spinning.

#### Control-line planes

The greatest danger with these planes is the speed of the spinning propeller and the speed of the plane itself. Fly such planes well clear of other people.

#### Radio-controlled planes

Unlike wire-controlled planes, radio-controlled planes are not limited by the length of the controlling wire and need a large clear area for safe operation. These planes should only be operated under adult supervision.

### Safety at home

- 📦 Never fly control-line planes near overhead power lines.
- 📦 Control-line planes and radio-controlled planes could pose a serious risk to other people and should not be used without adult supervision.
- 📦 Always operate radio-controlled planes within a clear line of sight.
- 📦 Be especially careful when operating mechanically launched planes. These can be more dangerous than hand-launched ones

because their flight direction can be uncontrollable and inaccurate and they travel with more force and speed.

## Chemistry Sets

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While most dangerous chemicals have been excluded from chemistry sets, a normally harmless chemical or a mixture of harmless chemicals in inexperienced hands can be dangerous. Chemistry set packaging should have a warning label that clearly describes the nature of any potential hazards that may result from the set's contents.

Consider the age of the child who will use the set before you buy it—some potentially dangerous items like Bunsen burners are essential to the proper functioning of chemistry sets and will be included.

### Before You Buy

- ❗ Check for a warning label that meets the requirements of the US CPSC standard. This could include 'poisonous chemicals' or 'gas burner included'.
- ❗ Check the contents of the kit—some include burners for heating chemicals. These may be operated by gas or mentholated spirits.

### Safety at home

- ❗ Keep burners out of the reach of younger children and only allow older children to use them under supervision.
- ❗ Chemistry sets should never be left in reach of younger children.
- ❗ A responsible adult should always be supervising experiments and the use of chemicals.
- ❗ Be aware that spirit or fumes from spirit burners could be inhaled or swallowed, affecting a child's breathing— and if spilled, the spirits can cause fires.



## Water Toys & Floats

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When you buy toys for use in water, remember that they are not life saving devices. Life saving devices are covered by specific US safety standards as personal flotation devices and are not covered by this safety checklist.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission standard for Children's Flotation Toys and Swimming Aids covers flotation toys used by children younger than 16. The standard defines a flotation toy as a device that provides buoyancy but is not attached to the body. It includes things like rings, inflatable arm bands, kick boards and small inflatable toy boats. The standard requires that these goods must pass a series of performance tests and must be marked with required warning labels.

## Before You Buy

### Inflatable Arm Bands and Rings

- 📦 Inflatable arm bands, generally worn on the child's upper arms, and inflatable rings worn around the waist, must be marked with a warning notice.
- 📦 The sole purpose of inflatable rings is to keep a child on the water's surface. A child who goes under the water wearing an inflatable ring may return to the surface in an unsafe position, such as feet first.

### Kick or Boogie Boards

- 📦 Kickboards help children develop their kicking technique and gain confidence in the water and should also be marked with the safety warning.

### Floating Pillows

- 📦 Inflatable pillows or air mattresses provide a way to rest or play on the water, but are not intended to be life saving devices.

### Face Masks and Goggles

- 📦 Swimming goggles have a separate lens for each eye, and are not designed for underwater diving.
- 📦 Face masks have one large lens covering eyes and nose and are designed for underwater diving. A mask that is too small will be uncomfortable, and one that is too large may not seal and could allow water to enter.

### Flippers

Flippers improve the power of a swimmer's kick, but are not flotation aids.

You should also consider where the flippers will be used—flippers held in place by a strap around the heel do not usually have a base that covers the heel and the sole of the foot, and are not recommended for use on rough surfaces like rocks or coral.

## Safety in the Pool

- 📦 Kickboards, floaties or floating pillows should not be used without adult supervision. They are not designed as life saving devices.
- 📦 Do not rely on inflatable arm bands and inflatable rings to keep a child afloat—they may be slow in returning a child to the water's surface or may return the wearer to the surface in an unsafe position.
- 📦 All water play should be competently supervised.
- 📦 Consider using a mix of aids to help a child learn to swim as prolonged wearing of blow-up arm bands or rings can cause chafing.
- 📦 Buy the correct size and style of product for your child's use.

## Ride-On Toys

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Kids love wheeled toys but these can be dangerous. The most common injuries associated with wheels are falls—and over half of these are caused by irregular riding surfaces.

This section includes pedal cars and sit-on toys like cars and trucks that are propelled by the child pushing along the ground with their legs and feet.

A ride-on toy should be stable and not tip in any direction on a slope when the child is sitting on it.



## Before You Buy

### Steering Wheels

- ❖ Column-mounted steering wheels should not be easy to remove. An exposed steering wheel shaft could spear the rider.
- ❖ The steering wheel should be made from a material strong enough to resist the impact of a child in an accident. If the steering wheel shatters it could expose the shaft and spear the child.

### Wheels and Wheel Rims

- ❖ Wheels and wheel rims, especially plastic or wooden ones, should be strong enough not to collapse or disintegrate under normal riding conditions. They should be able to withstand shocks such as hitting curbs, large stones or irregular surfaces.

### Seats

- ❖ Seats should be made from a material that is not likely to split, crack or shatter on impact and place the rider at risk of being speared by the exposed seat post. All seats and surfaces,

including those underneath the seat, should be smooth so they can't cut fingers.

### Handlebars/Grips

- ❖ Check that the handlebar is not loose.
- ❖ If the handlebars are raised, check the supporting stem is inserted far enough down the shaft for it to be stable.
- ❖ Handlebar ends should be covered and the handgrips secure.
- ❖ Exposed handlebar ends can severely injure a child in a fall.
- ❖ The shaft supporting the handlebars should be strong enough to resist an impact during an accident.
- ❖ When seated, the rider's arms should be slightly bent when holding the handgrips and the child's knees should not hit the handlebar.

### Support Between Front and Back Wheels

- ❖ The support or frame between the front and back wheels should not bend or break under likely stress.

### Pedal-Operated Toys

- ❖ The rods connecting the pedals to the driving wheels should be firmly connected at all joints. The joints should not be sloppy or able to be disconnected, as a disconnected rod could spear upwards or dig into the ground and tip the toy.
- ❖ It should not be possible for a child's foot to become tangled in the connecting rods or the pedals. Feet should not be able to be trapped under any part of the toy when it is moving (check the pedals at their lowest position).
- ❖ Pedal toys operated by a sprocket and a chain or belt drive should have guards to prevent fingers and toes or clothing from getting caught.

# Bicycles

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## Before You Buy

- 📦 Select the right size cycle for your child's size. A quick test for selecting the right size cycle is to place your child on the cycle and check that their arms are slightly bent when holding the handgrips, and that their knees won't hit the handlebar when pedaling.
- 📦 Ensure that the drive chain mechanism is covered with a guard to prevent fingers being trapped.
- 📦 Ensure the handlebar is firmly fitted. If the handle bars are raised, check the supporting stem is inserted far enough down the shaft that it's stable.
- 📦 The handlebar ends should be covered and the handgrips secure. Exposed handlebar ends can severely injure a child in a fall.
- 📦 The seat should be smooth, with no sharp edges underneath it, so it won't cut fingers.
- 📦 The material used for the seat should be in good condition and not showing signs of wear such as splitting, cracking or shattering. If the seat detaches on impact the exposed seat post could injure your child.

## Safety When Riding

- 📦 Teach your child how to use the bicycle brakes. Foot operated brakes are preferable for this development stage of your child.

- 📦 Provide a safe environment for your child to learn to use the bike. A safe environment means keeping the child away from traffic, pedestrians, steep slopes and uneven ground.
- 📦 Ensure your child wears appropriate safety equipment, such as a helmet, when riding.



# Rocking Horses

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Rocking horses have been a popular nursery toy for many years; however, they can still pose injury risks to their riders.

## Before You Buy

- 📦 The rockers should be long enough and shaped so that the rocking horse will not tip over forwards or backwards under vigorous use.
- 📦 The rockers should be far enough apart (or wide enough) to prevent the horse from tipping over sideways, especially when the child is mounting the horse from the side.
- 📦 Saddles should be firmly fixed or glued to the horse. They should not be nailed in place, as exposed nails could form a dangerous sharp point.
- 📦 Stirrups should be firmly attached to the saddle or the horse and be adjustable.

# Trampolines

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Trampolines provide children with a great way to develop balance and coordination skills, but they also cause many injuries. When children fall they hit the side of the trampoline, the ground or some other object near the trampoline. They can also have their skin pinched by the springs.

## Before You Buy

- 📦 Be sure the trampoline frame has padding.
- 📦 Ensure that the area around the trampoline (ideally 2 yards wide on all sides) is free from hazards like walls, play equipment or garden furniture.
- 📦 Ideally, an area of 2 yards all around the trampoline should be a thick layer of soft, impact-absorbing material (for example pine bark, woodchip or sand). This should be raked regularly to reduce its compacting.
- 📦 Ideally, the jumping surface should be as close to the ground level as possible, so there is less distance to fall. Consider how the trampoline might be positioned to minimize the height above the ground.

## Safety at Home

- 📦 Keep toddlers away from the trampoline while it is being used and ensure they do not go underneath it.
- 📦 High-risk skills like somersaults should only be taught by trained professionals and should be performed under supervision.

- 📦 Buy safety pads to completely cover the steel frame and springs if your trampoline does not have them. Safety pads should be a contrasting color to the mat.
- 📦 Only one child at a time should be allowed on the trampoline.
- 📦 Teach your child to jump in the centre of the mat and to climb, not jump, off the trampoline.
- 📦 Regularly check that the trampoline is in good condition; make sure that the mat does not have holes, the springs are intact and securely attached at both ends, the frame is not bent, and the leg braces are securely locked.
- 📦 Supervise children at all times.



## Play Houses & Tents

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It is important that play houses are located in places that can be supervised by an adult, not on building sites or isolated areas away from the safety of home.

### Before You Buy

- 🎁 If the playhouse has doors a child must be able to easily open them from the inside. This will stop the child from being trapped inside.
- 🎁 The gap at the hinged side of the doors should be at least .5", so that a child's fingers will not be caught or crushed in the gap.
- 🎁 Playhouses and tents must have adequate ventilation holes in their covers, walls or doors. Some of the ventilation openings should remain unblocked when the playhouse or tent is placed against a wall.

### Safety at Home

- 🎁 Never allow children to play with unused refrigerators or freezers because children have been known to become trapped inside and suffocate.

# Product Safety Standards

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There are thousands of voluntary US standards on a broad range of goods including nursery furniture and equipment for babies but only a few of these product standards are mandatory (compulsory by law).

## Voluntary Standards

A voluntary standard is a published document that sets out specifications and procedures to ensure that a material, product, method or service is fit for its purpose and consistently performs the way it was intended.

Standards are usually formulated in response to demands from the community and are developed by committees representing a range of community, government and industry interests.

American standards are written by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, a government organization whose role is to prepare voluntary standards.

Suppliers sometimes choose to have an independent certifying authority examine their processes and certify their product's compliance with certain standards.

Such certifying authorities may authorize the use of proprietary certification marks. Undertaking such certification schemes is at the discretion of the supplier and is not a requirement contained in any standard.

However, it may give consumers some added confidence of a suppliers' ongoing commitment to conforming to particular standards.

## Mandatory Standards

Voluntary standards are often used as the basis for mandatory standards under the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

There are two types of mandatory product standards: safety standards and information standards.

**Safety standards** are declared when products are likely to be hazardous. They require that goods comply with particular performance, composition, contents, design, construction, finish, labeling or packaging rules.

**Information standards** are introduced if harm to consumers is possible in the absence of information about a product. They require prescribed information to be given to consumers when they buy certain goods.

### Enforcing Mandatory Standards

The CPSC is responsible for enforcing mandatory consumer product safety and information standards, and bans of unsafe goods. Some states may have their own product safety standards.

Because preventing injury is better than cure, the CPSC attaches great importance to promoting compliance with the safety provisions as well as to remedial enforcement action.

The CPSC often seeks the immediate withdrawal of defective goods from sale and recall of the goods. Other remedies include injunctions, damages, a requirement for corrective advertising and various ancillary orders such as court enforceable undertakings to ensure future compliance.

Supplying goods that do not comply with a mandatory standard is a federal offence and may result in substantial fines for offending corporations and/or individuals.

*For information about Product Safety regulations visit the CPSC website at [www. http://www.cpsc.gov/](http://www.cpsc.gov/).*



## Children's Product & Toy Recalls

A substantial number of toys and children's products are recalled each year because of safety defects.

The CPSC operates the Product Recalls website, and advises manufacturers and suppliers on how to conduct a voluntary product recall. The website

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prerel.html>

allows consumers to search a database of recalled toys and children's products.



**Disclaimer**

*The information in this eBook is general in nature and may not be relevant to your specific circumstances. While every reasonable effort was made to provide current and accurate information, readers should be aware that [www.RecalledToyAlert.com](http://www.RecalledToyAlert.com) accepts no liability for any loss or damage whatsoever attributable to reliance upon any of that information. Nothing in this book should be taken to replace the need to seek professional advice.*

*We recommend that readers exercise their own skill and care with respect to its use.*

**Acknowledgement**

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