

CPB's Guide to Shopping for Children

"Remember Safety First"



It is difficult enough to shop for children in today's marketplace with the assortment of toys, games, dolls, crafts, sports and recreational equipment available. The holidays can make this an even more daunting task as there are popular trends of "hot" items which, if in-stock, can be costly. However, the NYS Consumer Protection Board (CPB) reminds you that before you consider any of the above factors you should concentrate first on finding safe, age appropriate toys and activities for your children or other prospective youngsters on your holiday shopping list. The CPB is pleased to provide this handy guide of safety tips compiled from several of the nation's top child safety organizations to use while shopping for children of all ages. *Happy Holidays!*

Know the Top 5 Toy Hazards

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) with whom the CPB partners in NY recently announced the top five toys that consumers should exercise caution in giving their children.

- ◆ **Scooters and other Riding Toys** – Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates allow the rider to go fast and fall which can cause serious injuries or even death. Helmets and safety gear should be worn at all times and be sized to fit.
- ◆ **Small balls and other Toys with Small Parts** – Children younger than age three have a tendency to put small objects in their mouths so avoid toys with small parts to prevent choking.
- ◆ **Balloons** – Balloons may be a symbol for parties and fun but they can be deadly to young children. Keep un-inflated and pieces of broken balloons away from children under the age of eight to prevent suffocation. Discard broken balloons immediately and look carefully for pieces that may have flown through the room.
- ◆ **Magnets** – Serious injuries and/or death can occur if a child swallows a magnet or a piece of a magnet. If you have kids in the home under the age of six, avoid toys with small magnets.
- ◆ **Chargers and Adapters** – Make sure your children know not to charge batteries without adult supervision. Some chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to children.

In addition to the above warnings, please take note of additional safety advice from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

- ◆ **Select** toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced or complicated may pose safety hazards for younger children.
- ◆ **Read** the instructions carefully before buying a toy or allowing your child to play with a toy they have received as a gift.
- ◆ **Purchase** and give toys that are battery-operated rather than have to be plugged into an electrical outlet for children under the age of 10 years. This will prevent the dangers associated with electrical shocks and burns.
- ◆ **Make** sure pull toys do not have strings attached that are more than 12 inches in length. Babies and toddlers can easily strangle themselves with strings, ropes or cords.

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Need ideas on choosing suitable toys for your children or other youngsters on your gift list? Here are some great suggestions provided by Safe Kids USA:

Newborn-to-One-Year

Crib gyms
Floor activity centers
Activity quilts
Squeaky toys
Soft dolls or stuffed animals

One-to-Three-Year-Olds

Soft blocks
Large blocks
Push and pull toys
Pounding and shaping toys
Books

Three-to-Five-Year-Olds

Non-toxic art supplies
Pretend toys (i.e., play money, phones)
Teddy bears or dolls
Outdoor toys such as a tricycle
with a properly sized helmet

Five-to-Nine-Year-Olds

Arts and crafts kits
Puppets
Jump ropes
Non-toxic art supplies
Miniature dolls and action figures

Nine-to-Fourteen-Year-Olds

Handheld electronic games
Board games
Sports/Recreational equipment
Model kits
Musical instruments

Stay vigilant even when all the gifts have been opened and children are scrambling around to look at everything they and their siblings received. This is a prime time for accidents to occur as there is a great deal of commotion. Follow these three tips from the CPSC to help prevent a tragedy from occurring during your holiday festivities:

- ◆ **Discard** all plastic wrappings on toys as they can cause choking and/or suffocation.
- ◆ **Remain** vigilant on keeping your older children's toys and games away from their younger siblings.
- ◆ **Follow** closely all instructions and warnings on battery chargers as some are not capable of preventing overcharging.

Sources: CPSC, AAP, Safe Kids USA