



Tips on Toys

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Choosing Safe Toys for Children Aged Birth to 12 Years

Injury prevention and your kids—The biggest threat to the health of children over age one is not some dread disease. It is accidental injury. More children are seriously hurt or killed by accidental injuries than by anything else. And many childhood injuries can be prevented by parents who know how. You already care enough to do everything possible to protect your children. Protecting them from injuries is a very important way you can safeguard their health. This publication is one of a series that helps parents prevent childhood injuries.

Toys cause many preventable injuries. Tips on Toys will help you decide just which toys are safe for your children as they grow. Take a few minutes to look over the toys you already have, and keep these guidelines in mind when you buy new ones.

The suggestions made in this publication are based on national information about the kinds of toys most often involved in accidents. Most of this information was gathered by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the checklist was developed under funding from U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Up to 1 year

Age Group

- Awareness of sound, motion, touch & color
- Hand to mouth curiosity.
- (teach the early walker not to walk or run with toys in his mouth).
- Need constant supervision during play.

Safe Toys

- Unbreakable large-end rattles.
- Squeak toys with molded in noise-maker.
- Washable dolls and stuffed animals with bright embroidered features.
- Brightly colored objects hanging in view (mobile, etc.) out of reach and with cords less than 12" long.
- Brightly colored cloth or rubber balls with textured surface to grasp.
- Unbreakable cups and smooth objects that can be chewed.
- Brightly colored beads on a strong cord less than 10" long.

Dangerous Toys

- Rattles with ends smaller than 13/8" in diameter.
- Those with small enough to swallow or with removable parts that are sharp or could be swallowed.
- Those with poisonous paint, or cords over 12" long.
- Stuffed animals with glass or button eyes.

1 to 2 years

Age Group

- Time of reckless mobility.
- Hand to mouth testing.
- Very curious.
- Needs extremely close supervision during play.

Safe Toys

- Blocks with rounded corners.
- Push-pull toys.
- Books with cloth or stiff pasteboard pages.

- Non-glass mirrors.
- Take apart toys with large pieces.

Dangerous Toys

- Same as above PLUS toys of older children that mobility puts within the toddler's reach
- Toys with strings over 12" long

2 to 3 years

Age Group

- Development of language and more curiosity
- Beginning age of most toy related injuries at age 2

Safe Toys

- Peg boards with large pieces
- Wooden animals
- Large crayons
- Low rocking horse
- Dustless chalk and chalkboard
- Simple musical instruments
- Simple jigsaw puzzles with large pieces
- Blocks with numbers and letters
- Toys that aid color, size and shape identification
- Sturdy cars and riding toys (wagons, riding toys, tricycle for 2 1/2 year olds at earliest)

Dangerous Toys

- Those with sharp edges or easily breakable material
- Toys with small removable parts or poisonous paints
- Marbles, beads and coins
- Electrical toys
- Metal toys with unfinished slots, holes or edges that can cut
- Lead soldiers
- Tricycles with seats over 12" high (not for children under 2 1/2 years)
- Riding toys used in hilly areas or inclined driveways

3 to 4 years

Age Group

- Imagination and imitation combined with vigorous physical activity
- Ending age of most toy related injuries at 4 years

Safe Toys

- Those in 2-3 year category plus
- Toy telephones
- Metal tea set
- Dolls with wrap-around clothing
- Construction sets with easily connecting large pieces
- Rugged key-wound or friction-operated toys
- Blunt scissors
- Lacing cards
- Simple card and board games
- Non-electrical trains
- Selected toys with small parts
- Tricycles with low-slung seats, used off roadways

Dangerous Toys

- Highly flammable costumes
- Electrical toys
- Shooting toys that endanger eyes
- Poorly balanced tricycles or riding toys
- Lead soldiers
- Riding toys in hilly areas or inclined driveways
- Tricycles that take child too far from supervision
- Broken toys

4 to 6 years

Age Group

- Will develop cooperative social play. Improve physical coordination
- Begins era of bicycle related injuries

Safe Toys

- Pail and shovel
- Building blocks
- More advanced construction sets
- Cut-out paper dolls, hand and finger puppets
- Modeling clay

- Paints and paint books
- Non-electrical trains, battery operated toys
- Kites
- Stencils, activity books and picture books
- More demanding board and card games
- Simple musical instruments
- Small sports equipment
- Selected toys with small parts
- Bicycle with 20" wheel and training wheels, for 4-7 year olds

Dangerous Toys

- Poisonous or oil-based paint sets
- Flammable costumes or ones with material to the floor
- Kites made of electrically conductible aluminized polyester film
- Electrical toys, unless battery operated
- Shooting toys and darts with pointed tips
- Poorly-balanced tricycles or wagons
- Bicycle poorly maintained
- Bicycle used on roadways
- Bicycle too large for child
- Fireworks of any kind
- Lawn darts

6 to 8 years

Age Group

- Further cooperative and social play
- Physical and intellectual interests. May have renewed interest in playing alone

Safe Toys

- Kites
- Battery-powered electrical toys with Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approval
- Puppets and puppet theatre
- Complicated jigsaw puzzles
- Games requiring some reading
- Well constructed, lightweight tool sets
- Dolls and doll equipment
- Flower press
- Set demonstrating simple principles of science. (Magnets & magnifiers, etc.)
- Equipment for playing bank, store, filling station, etc.
- Bicycle with 24" wheel for 7-10 year olds

Dangerous Toys

- Kites made of electrically conductible aluminized polyester film
- Poorly made sports equipment
- Shooting toys and toys with loud noises (cap guns, etc.)
- Fireworks of any kind
- Electrical toys run on household current
- Lawn darts
- Broken toys

8 to 12 years

Age Group

- Art, Craft, Building and Science interests

Safe Toys

- Electrical toys with UL approval used on household current only after you have explained how to use toy and electrical plug and outlets
- Bicycle with 26" wheel for kids over 10
- Other sidewalk vehicles, skates, skateboards, etc.
- Well-constructed sports equipment
- Put together models
- Chemistry and other science kits
- Hobby and Arts and Crafts kits and materials
- Some projectile toys (dart guns, etc.)

Dangerous Toys

- Lawn darts
- Fireworks of any kind
- Sharp-edged tools
- Poorly constructed sports equipment
- B-B Guns/Air Rifles, until child understands gun safety