



NEWS RELEASE

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**Think Toy Safety When Shopping for the Holiday!**

The malls will be getting crowded. The holiday season is upon us. Soon it will be time to hit the stores for gift shopping. Choosing toys for children can be a task, especially if you don't have children of your own. You want to buy children the toys they have been begging for, how do you know if the toys are safe?

- Toys should be matched to a child's abilities and not just the chronological age level. The manufacturer recommendations serve as a useful guide.
- A toy that is too advanced or too simple for a child may be misused, which can lead to injury.
- Think BIG when choosing toys. All toy parts should be larger than the child's mouth to prevent injuries, including choking.
- For all children less than eight years old, avoid toys that have sharp edges, toys that need electricity to run or have heating elements.
- Be careful when choosing toys that have painted cast metal. Some of these toys have been made overseas and can contain high lead levels.

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests the following list of toys for specific age groups:

For newborn to 1-year olds: choose "eye-catching" toys that appeal to the baby's sight, hearing and touch.

For 1- to 2 year-old toddlers: Children this age are curious and have no sense of danger. Supervision is important and the best toys for this age group include cloth or plastic books with large pictures, fit together toys, pounding toys and shape toys.

For 2- to 5-year-old preschoolers: Children this age are beginning to develop skills such as riding a tricycle, increasing finger control and the ability to build with large blocks. Approved nontoxic art supplies, books, musical instruments and outdoor toys such as t-ball stands, slides or swings.

For 5- to 9-year olds: Toys for this age group should help a child promote skill development and creativity. Toys include jump ropes, roller skates, electric trains, hand puppets, and sports equipment.

For 10- to 14-year-olds: Children this age enjoy team sports and games that require increased dexterity. Strenuous physical activity is also popular for this age. Children begin to develop hobbies and a strong interest in scientific activities. Computers, microscopes, table and board games and equipment used in outdoor sports is appropriate.

When buying sports equipment remember the proper protective gear that goes along with the gift. Include protective gear such as elbow pads, helmet, reflective clothing, stickers or bike reflectors, bicycle horn or goggles for a skier.

Use your own good judgment when buying toys this holiday. Make sure the excitement of the holidays and those glitzy toy ads don't turn your fabulous gift into a tragic one.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, "Age-Appropriate Toys". Retrieved November 9, 2001 from <http://aap.org/family/medemredirect.htm>