



## NEWS RELEASE

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## Shop for safe toys this holiday season

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As Alabamians begin shopping to find the perfect toys, they should be aware of the importance of making selections with safety in mind. Although the majority of toys are safe, toys can become dangerous if misused or if they fall into the hands of children who are too young to play with them.

Safety experts stress the need to pick “age appropriate” toys to reduce the risk of choking, strangulation, and other potentially fatal hazards. Dianne Sims of the Alabama Department of Public Health says, “Include toys that help promote learning and growth in all areas of development.”

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has safety regulations for toys. Knowing the **ABC’s** of toy safety will make for happy holidays: **A**wareness is being aware of what products pose the greatest risks. Did you know the leading causes of toy-related fatalities are choking and aspiration of toy parts? **B**enefits to consumers are the increased scrutiny of toys. Toy manufacturers must design and manufacture their product to meet regulations so that hazardous products are not sold. A recall can be issued if a product causes a safety risk to children. **C**onsumers should be aware of and informed of recalls.

For a list of toy recalls or to report a toy-related injury, call the CPSC at 800-638-2772 or visit the Web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). Sign up to receive product recalls. Other toy safety resources are available at the American Academy of Pediatrics. Visit the academy’s Web site at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) or call at (847)434-4000.

### **Toy safety tips from CPSC and Injury Prevention**

Before shopping for toys, consider the child’s age, interest and skill level.

Make sure the toy is sturdy and that no small parts (such as eyes, noses, buttons or other parts) can break off the toy.

When shopping, read labels and follow the age and safety information on the warning labels.

Keep toys with small parts away from children under age 3. They can choke on small toys and parts. Small, rounded and oval objects (like balls and marbles) can easily fit into a child’s mouth. Government regulations specify that toys for children under age 3 cannot have parts less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches long.

Carefully read instructions for the assembly and use of toys.

Always remove and discard all packaging before giving a gift to a baby or small child. Remind caregivers, including grandparents, of play-related safety concerns. Separate and store toys by age levels. Teach children to put toys away after playing. Safe storage prevents falls and other injuries. Check old and new toys regularly for damages such as sharp edges or small parts. Make repairs immediately or throw away damaged toys. For all children under 8, avoid toys that have sharp edges and points. Keep un-inflated balloons and broken balloon pieces away from children. Crib toys with strings, cords and ribbons present a strangulation hazard.

### **Toy hazards cited by CPSC**

Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast and falls could be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be sized to fit. For children under age 6, avoid building sets with small magnets. If magnets or pieces with magnets are swallowed, serious injuries and/or deaths can occur. Projectile toys such as air rockets, darts and sling shots are for older children. Improper use of these toys can result in serious eye injuries. Chargers and adapters can pose burn hazards to children.

### **Suitable toys cited by Safe Kids**

**Newborns to 1-year-olds** explore with their hands, mouths and eyes, and enjoy toys they can touch or squeeze: Crib gyms, floor activity centers, activity quilts, squeaky toys, soft dolls or stuffed animals.

**1- to 3-year-olds** climb, jump, walk and throw and play rough-and-tumble games: *Soft blocks, large blocks, push and pull toys, pounding and shaping toys, books.*

**3- to 5-year-olds** like to experiment with imaginary situations and have toys that are close companions: *Non-toxic art supplies, pretend toys (such as play money, telephone), teddy bears or dolls, outdoor toys such as tricycle with a helmet.*

**5- to 9-year-olds** like to be challenged with complex games that teach specific skills and concepts: *Arts and crafts kits, puppets, jump ropes, non-toxic art supplies, miniature dolls and action figures.*

**9- to 14-year-olds** develop lifelong skills, hobbies and enjoy team sports: *Handheld electronic games, board games, sports equipment, model kits, musical instruments.*