

When it Comes to Kids' Toys, One Size Does Not Fit All

Safe Kids Kansas offers tips on Toy and Shopping Safety

Topeka – As your child makes their holiday wish list this season, be sure to check it twice for safety. Catalogs, television commercials, store displays and online advertising inundate us with images of the latest toys and gadgets, but not every toy is right for every child. Make sure you and other gift-givers are safety savvy before you hit the stores this holiday season.

Choosing the Right Toys

When choosing toys for children, pay close attention to warning labels and manufacturer's guidelines. "More than 22 billion dollars are spent on toys and games in the United States every year, and most of those toys are very safe," said Cherie Sage, Safe Kids Kansas. "Warning labels and manufacturers' instructions tell you how to use the product safely." If the manufacturer sets a minimum age or other restrictions, there's a reason. A label reading 'Not appropriate for children under 3' may be present because the toy poses a choking hazard, not because it's too difficult for a 2-year-old.

If you buy toys secondhand or get hand-me-downs, visit www.recalls.gov to make sure the toy hasn't been recalled for safety reasons. Sign up for email alerts on the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website www.cpsc.gov or download the CPSC Recalls app to your smart phone to keep up-to-date on toy recalls beyond the holiday itself. If a new toy comes with a product registration card, mail it in so the manufacturer can contact you if the item is ever recalled. Report safety concerns about toys to the CPSC at 800-638-2772 or www.cpsc.gov. Your experience could be part of a pattern that might lead to a recall.

Safe Kids Kansas also recommends:

- **Buy age-appropriate toys.** Consider your child's age when purchasing a toy or game. It's worth a second to read the instructions and warning labels to make sure it's just right for your child. Avoid building sets with small magnets for children. Keep rare earth magnets and adult desktop magnet toys out of reach and out of sight of children. Magnets are extremely dangerous if swallowed.
- **Identify dangerous small parts.** Look at the product labeling for age recommendations. Use a small parts tester or cardboard tube from a roll of toilet paper to identify choking hazards. Do not let small children play with anything that can fit into one of these cylinders. Products that grow larger when placed in water must be kept out of reach of children. These products can be swallowed and become lodged internally, requiring surgical removal.
- **Keep batteries out of sight and out of reach.** Lithium button batteries are coin-sized batteries that can easily be swallowed by children and can come from many devices, such as remote



controls. Other places you may find them are: singing greeting cards, watches, remotes, bathroom scales, and flameless candles. If a child swallows a battery, go to the emergency room immediately. Tell doctors and nurses that your child may have swallowed a battery. Do not let the child eat or drink until a chest x-ray can determine if a battery is present. Do not induce vomiting. Call the National Battery Ingestion Hotline at 202-625-3333 for additional treatment information.

- **Buy the proper safety gear.** Riding toys account for the greatest number of toy-related injuries. If you purchase a riding toy, such as a scooter, skateboard, in-line skates or bicycle, remember that the gift isn't complete without a helmet and appropriate protective gear.
- **Inspect toys.** Check children's play areas regularly for broken toys and dispose of them. Do not let young children play with toys that have straps, cords or strings longer than 7 inches, due to the risk of strangulation.
- **Actively supervise children.** Caregivers should actively supervise children playing with any toy that has small parts, moving parts, electrical or battery power, cords, wheels or any other potentially risky component. Simply being in the same room as your child is not necessarily supervising. Active supervision means giving your child your full attention.
- **Store toys safely.** Teach children to put toys away after playing to help prevent falls and make sure toys intended for younger children are stored separately from those for older children.

Shopping Safely

Sixty-six children a day are treated in U.S. Emergency Departments for shopping cart-related injuries, according to a study conducted by researchers in the Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital. Falls are the most common cause of shopping-cart related injury in children. Tip-overs and children colliding with the shopping cart are other causes of injury.

Top five ways to avoid shopping-cart injuries:

1. Never leave your child unattended in a shopping cart and stay close to the cart at all times.
2. If you are placing your child in the shopping cart seat, always use a harness or the safety belt provided to restrain your child. If parts are broken or missing, choose another cart.
3. Make sure your child remains seated.
4. Never place your own infant carrier on top of a shopping cart. If your child is not old enough to sit upright in the shopping cart seat, consider using a front- or back-pack style carrier.
5. Do not let your child ride in the cart basket, under the basket, on the sides or front of the cart.
6. Do not let older siblings push or hang on the sides of the cart when a younger child is riding in the cart, unless you feel they are mature and trustworthy enough to do so safely.
7. Use the shopping carts that have a wheeled child carrier that is permanently attached and made part of the shopping cart. Some of these models look like cars or benches attached to the shopping cart.

For more safety information, visit www.safekids.org.



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About Safe Kids Kansas

Safe Kids Kansas works to prevent childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability to children. Safe Kids Kansas is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing injuries in children. Coalition members include over 70 statewide organizations, agencies and businesses and a network of local coalitions across the state.

Visit us at www.safekidskansas.org and on Facebook.

This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request. For more information about obtaining an alternative format, you may contact Safe Kids Kansas at 785-296-1223, or csage@kdheks.gov. Both speech/hearing disabled and hearing Kansans can access the Kansas Relay Center by calling toll-free 1-800-766-3777. Callers should inform the relay operator of the number they wish to call and the type of call they are making direct, credit card, collect, person-to-person, etc.



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