



# Holiday Hints

## Top Five Tips For Buying Safe Toys This Holiday Season

by Joan Lawrence

(NAPSA)—This holiday season, you can pick out toys that are both fun and safe with these simple tips:

**1. Follow the age guidance and other safety information on toy packaging.** The age grading isn't about how smart a child is—it's based on the developmental abilities of children at a given age and the specific features of the toy.

**2. Choose a toy that matches your child's age and interests.** The perfect toys are the ones that are right for your children. If a toy is too advanced, they'll become frustrated, and if it's too simple, they'll get bored. Providing kids with age-appropriate playthings will help them stay safe and reap the full benefits of playtime.

**3. Avoid toys with small parts for kids under 3.** Items around the home that have small parts are fine for older kids but can pose a choking hazard for children under 3 (or kids who still mouth objects). Toys with small parts have a warning label on the packaging, so keep a careful eye out as you shop.

**4. Shop at a retailer you know and trust.** Store staff at established businesses will be knowledgeable about age-appropriate toys. At garage sales, second-hand stores or temporary “pop-up” retailers, sellers may not know about the latest safety information and certified products—and may not be around should an issue arise later on.

**5. Visit [PlaySafe.org](http://PlaySafe.org) for more safety advice.** Once the gifts are unwrapped,



**Playing with your kids can be one of the best ways to be sure they're using their new toys safely—and it's fun.**

visit [www.PlaySafe.org](http://www.PlaySafe.org) for tons of advice on toys and play. It's a comprehensive, free resource that includes detailed tips on small parts, advice for new parents, how to keep kids safe during active play, information on battery and magnet safety, the importance of parental supervision during play and much more.

It's important to know that all toys sold in the U.S., no matter where they're made, are subject to strict federal safety laws and standards. So just be sure to pick out toys that match a child's age and interests and then get on the floor and play with your kids. Showing little ones how to properly use a toy can be the best way to make sure they understand how to safely enjoy it.

• *Ms. Lawrence, a.k.a. the “Toy Safety Mom,” is a lifelong child safety advocate with more than 20 years of experience in the toy industry and senior vice president of standards and regulatory affairs at The Toy Association.*