

Toy Safety Tips For Savvy Shoppers

(NAPSA)—With concerns about toy safety making headlines, giving a child a gift that makes their wishes come true may seem more daunting than delightful. Parents, grandparents and other gift givers can take an active role to help ensure safe and fun play. The following tips on safe toy selection from the toy experts at eToys.com can help caregivers and gift givers when shopping:

Check the manufacturer's recommended age. Age recommendations measure the safety of a toy—not your child's IQ. They are based on four different aspects of the toy:

- Potential choking hazards, which pose the greatest threat to kids under age 3;
- A child's physical ability to play with the toy;
- A child's ability to understand how to correctly play with the toy;
- General developmental needs of a particular age group.

Use the age range as a starting point based on the information above. You are most familiar with your child's developmental stage and ability level, so it's up to you to decide if he or she is ready. A too-advanced toy could be misused and lead to an injury.

Ensure that younger siblings play only with their own toys. Keep a close eye on younger children who want to mimic older siblings by playing with the older child's toys. Instruct older kids to put unused toys away, well out of reach of younger children.

Pick well-informed and reputable toy retailers. Online toy retailers like eToys.com provide information on the most up-to-date toy recalls, and will notify you if a toy you ordered through their Web site is recalled later.

Take the time to teach kids



Who's that? Toddlers love to look at their reflections. Parents love to give them toys that are safe.

how to use new toys. Accidents can happen when misuse occurs, so help keep your children safe by making sure they're playing with toys correctly.

Remove toy package and wrapping immediately. Don't store toys in their original packaging. Plastic wrap can cause suffocation, and staples or sharp plastic edges can cut.

Avoid hand-me-down or garage sale toys. As economical as they may be, these types of toys may be too worn or contain parts that don't meet current safety standards.

Never give small children plastic bags, wrapping or latex balloons. Choking is a major concern for young children and these items could obstruct a child's airway completely.

Remember the importance of parental supervision. Keep an eye on your child during playtime to ensure age-appropriate choices and safe activities. Even better, take a little time out of your busy day to bond with your child through play.

For additional tips on toy safety and more ideas to ensure safe play, visit the eToys.com Safety Center (www.etoys.com/safety).