by Joan Lawrence, the "Toy Safety Mom"

(NAPS)—When heading outside to play, keep these top safety tips in mind:

- **Always supervise children.** Be extra vigilant when kids are playing in or near the water, on driveways, and near streets with traffic. Keep toys away from these "danger" zones so kids aren't lured into an unsafe situation.

- **Make sure kids are wearing helmets, knee pads and other protective gear** when playing with all ride-on toys, including bicycles, tricycles, scooters and skateboards.

- **Shop at a retailer you know and trust,** since these businesses are knowledgeable about toy recalls. Be extra vigilant when shopping for toys at garage sales, flea markets and online marketplaces.

- **Water balloons are a blast, but uninflated and broken balloon pieces can be a choking hazard.** Be sure to clear away deflated and broken balloons so they don’t end up in the mouths of little ones.

- **Organize and store toys to prevent trips and falls.** Designate “parking” spaces for bikes and other ride-on toys, and store smaller items such as skateboards, chalk and bubbles on shelves.

For more trusted advice about keeping kids safe while they play all year long, visit www.PlaySafe.org.

**Ms. Lawrence 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.**