



STAYING
INFORMED

Toy safety guide



What parents can do

- › Choose toys that are appropriate for children's ages. Toys for older children may have hazards that younger ones do not understand. While they may have novel appeal to young children, they will not accelerate their development and may actually jeopardise their safety. 'Not suitable for children under three' means that there are small parts which could be swallowed; it is not an indication of skill level or intelligence.
- › It is important toys are not misused.
- › Check for any warnings in the instructions.
- › Be realistic about the time you can spend supervising your children's play and consider their individual maturity when selecting toys. Do not buy toys that will require your constant supervision unless you will be able to give it.
- › Do not buy on impulse based on high-pressure TV advertising.
- › Stop and think before purchasing a toy and personally check its safety features. Check toys for sharp points, splinters and rough edges.
- › Inspect toys regularly for wear and tear. Check toys regularly for loose parts which may be choking dangers.
- › Buy washable, non-breakable toys for babies. Anything that is smaller than a ping pong ball or fits inside a 35 mm film canister could choke a child under three if inhaled or swallowed.
- › Check toy chests and boxes. They should be designed not to close on top of children, or better still with a removable lid. Anything big enough to crawl inside must have ventilation holes.
- › Read the age labelling on new toys.
- › Check that there are no gaps or holes which could entrap a child's fingers.
- › If buying a projectile toy, only choose ones that have soft, one-piece darts or non-removable suction caps. Only allow projectile toys with low velocity and soft tipped parts.
- › Be wary of toys that make loud noises as they can be harmful to hearing, particularly toys which are held against the ear, such as walkie talkies and toy mobile phones.
- › Check for ventilation before buying tents, masks, helmets etc.
- › Make sure nails, screws or other fasteners are tight and properly fixed.
- › Make sure moving, folding and mechanical parts which could injure young fingers are not accessible.
- › Ensure paints and glazes used on painted toys and dyes used to colour fabric toys are non-toxic. This should be clearly stated on the packaging.
- › Remove any strings, cords and tails which are more than 300 mm (12 inches) long from toys (especially cot toys) before use. Loose lengths of string, cord and even fluffy tails can strangle young children or they could choke on them.
- › Ensure that ride-on toys are appropriate to the age of the child and are stable. Toy bikes should have effective brakes which can be applied by the rider.
- › Never leave 'dead' batteries in toys because they may leak poisons or liquid that may burn skin.



The ACCC enforces standards on a number of children's toy products including toys for children under three that may have or may produce small parts (choking hazard), bicycles and cosmetic products that are for children such as face paint and cosmetic kits.

There are also some toys that have been banned. Two recent ones are children's dart gun sets that contain small darts and yo yo water balls. Both these products have been the cause of serious injuries. The ACCC also enforces these bans.

Remember: play it safe. Parents and caregivers of children have an obligation to choose toys carefully.

