

Safe Play

Toy-related injuries happen when an infant or toddler chokes on a toy meant for an older child, when a child trips over a toy that was not put away after use, or when an unsupervised child hits another with a toy. Most play-related injuries can be avoided.

Everything in Its Place

Children must store their toys properly. This prevents toys from being lost, stolen or damaged. It also may prevent falls and keep younger children away from toys intended for older ones. It is especially important to keep toys off staircases to avoid falls.

Toys can be stored in toy chests, or in large, stackable plastic bins, smooth-edged baskets, or on sturdy, open shelves.

As Good As New

Check toys regularly for cracks, tears, sharp edges, small parts, loose buttons, dirt, etc. Children should alert their parents to let them know when toys need repair. Never allow toys to remain outdoors overnight. Rain, snow and dew cause rust damage that could make a toy unsafe. If a toy cannot be fixed, it should be thrown away.

Ten Steps to Fun and Safe Play

1. Before shopping for toys, think about the child's age and interests.
2. When shopping, read labels. Look for age ranges and safety warnings.
3. Be especially careful when choosing toys for children under three. Select toys that are free of small pieces (or pieces that separate or can be broken off), are lightweight, have no sharp edges or points.
4. At home, carefully read instructions, and keep in case you have a question later.
5. Always remove and throw away all packaging from a toy before giving it to a baby or small child.
6. A toy intended for an older child may be dangerous in the hands of a younger one.
7. Set good examples of safe play.
8. Always play where there is an adult to supervise.
9. Choose a safe storage place for toys.
10. Check toys at least every three months. Fix immediately or throw away damaged toys.

Make playtime a safe, fun and joyful experience!

Safety Watch:

- Be careful when buying toys for children under three:
- Avoid those with small parts that could be swallowed or put into the nose or ears.
- Check that the eyes and noses of stuffed animals and dolls are tight.
- Choose rattles, teething rings and squeeze toys that are too large to fit into a baby's throat.
- Avoid latex balloons; they could be a choking hazard.
- Pick unbreakable toys that are lightweight, washable and free of sharp corners, rough edges or strings.

Remember, your children need a variety of toys: ones for active play, make-believe play and creative play.

Know what your child likes, read labels and have fun!

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