

fact sheet

Play it safe with the five S's

1. Shape
2. Surface
3. Size
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5. Supervision

Shape

Regularly inspect toys for wear or damage. Check for sharp edges and points, splinters, loose parts and defective wiring.

Remove "dead" batteries from toys as they may leak corrosive liquid which could burn or poison. Encourage older children to keep their toys out of the reach of younger ones.

Teach children from a young age to put toys away when not in use, preferably in open boxes or cupboards at floor level with front opening doors.



Surface

Remember that small children will place playthings in their mouths. Ensure that paints and glazes used on painted toys and dyes used to colour fabric toys are non-toxic and that all toys are cleaned regularly. Surfaces should also be smooth, rounded and without any sharp edges or corners.



Size

For children under 3, the smaller the child, the bigger the toy. For your own personal guide to choking hazards, use a 35mm film canister which is similar in size to a ping pong ball or 50c piece. If an item is small enough to fit in then it is a potential choking hazard.

In most children the coughing reflex to clear blocked airways will not have fully developed till the age of three.

Make sure that any small parts that could be accidentally swallowed are firmly attached.





Strings

Strings, cords and tails which are more than 30cm long must be removed from toys (especially cot toys). Loose lengths of strings, cords and even fluffy tails can strangle young children and even choke them if swallowed.



Supervision

Parents and care givers of infants have an obligation to choose toys carefully and consider the five 'S's for toy safety. Be especially vigilant when infants are using toys in water.

Don't buy toys that will require your constant undivided attention unless you can give it.



Maintenance and Standards

Regularly check all toys carefully for sharp points, splinters and rough edges. Nails, screws or other fasteners should be tight and properly fixed. Moving, folding and mechanical parts which injure young fingers should not be accessible. Take particular care with hand me downs and second hand toys.

All toys should meet their applicable Australian and New Zealand Standard (AS/NZS ISO 8124).

Projectile Toys

Projectile toys which shoot objects are of particular concern as these can cause eye injuries including the loss of eyes. Parents need to ensure that projectile toys meet the Australian and New Zealand Standard for projectile toys prior to purchasing. Some toy guns can fire improvised projectiles such as nails or stones which are extra hazardous.

Projectile toys are very dangerous for small children. In fact, unless you can provide close and constant supervision it is recommended that projectile toys be avoided for any age group.

Noisy Toys

Be aware that noisy toys can and do cause hearing loss. Listen to a toy before buying it. If it sounds loud, hurts your ears or causes a ringing sensation, do not buy it! Be particularly careful with toy telephones and other toys that are intended to be held close to the ear. These toys usually have speakers in their earpieces. Avoid those that produce noise that is too loud when held close to the ear.

Toy Boxes

Young children have died or been injured when the lid of toy boxes fell on their head or neck. You should try to purchase toy boxes without lids or with lids that are lightweight and completely removable. If they do have lids, ensure there is a method of keeping the lid fixed open. You can chain them to the wall or install gas struts. Struts can be custom made – contact Kidsafe Qld for more information.

Install rubber stoppers under the lid to protect fingers should the lid fall, but also to ensure ventilation should a child become trapped inside.

There are laws that ensure toys for children under three and projectile toys meet stringent safety standards. If you think you have seen or bought an unsafe toy, please contact the Office of Fair Trading on 13 13 04. Visit www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au for more information on toy safety, nursery furniture and product recalls.

For information on toy recalls visit www.recalls.gov.au.

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