

# Toy Safety

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe from toy injuries.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in 2013, there were an estimated 256,700 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments

## Tips on choosing toys

Children learn through play. Having age-appropriate toys helps them develop skills.

Follow the age guidelines on the packaging when buying toys. For the child's safety, these guidelines are based on developmental age.

### Infants (younger than 1 year old)

Play and learn by touching and using their eyes and mouths. Some suggestion for toys might be:

- Soft animals, squeaky toys, chew toys, light-up balls and rattles.
- Crib mobiles are good, but should be removed when the child can pull up to reach them.
- Stationary play centers are safer than baby walkers. Look for toys with bright colors and smooth edges. They should be easy to clean or wash.
- Avoid toys with strings that can wrap around a baby's neck.



**Toddlers (1 to 2 years old)** are beginning to put things together. Look for toys that you can play with them:

- Solid wood blocks of different sizes
- Lightweight balls at least 3 inches across
- Pounding toys and blocks
- Do not buy battery-operated toys



**Preschoolers (3 to 4 years old)** are learning fine motor skills and are beginning to be creative in their play and stories.

- Riding toys, rocking horses
- Hand puppets
- Art supplies and simple board games
- Dolls and doll clothes with movable parts (zippers, laces, etc.)

**School-aged children (6-10 years old)** like toys they can play with their friends and that challenge their imagination and eye-hand coordination:

- Action figures
- Board games
- Sports equipment (bikes/scooters/skateboards/skates)
- Game systems & handheld electronic games

Make sure you include protective gear such as a properly fitting helmet, elbow and knee pads. Make a rule that this is required for utilization of bike/scooter/skateboard/skates. **Children younger than 8 years old should be supervised when using scooters.**

## Watch for Dangers

- Use mylar balloons instead of latex ones. If children chew and choke on pieces of latex balloon, the Heimlich maneuver might not work.
- Check toys regularly and discard any that have sharp edges, cracks or other damage that may harm a child.

## Be alert to keep play safe

- Always watch children while they are at play. Intervene when a toy or play equipment is not used as intended or when you anticipate a problem.
- Be sure children use toys in a safe environment. Riding toys should not be used near stairs, traffic, or swimming pools.
- Teach children to put toys away after play time to prevent accidental injuries.



Consult [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org) for safety guidelines on all-terrain vehicles and other motorized toys. Be prepared to say "no" to dangerous toys or to toys the child is not mature enough to handle. Keep in mind that playtime is very important to learning but should be a safe time as well.