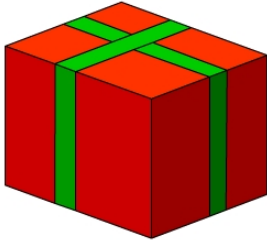


Don't Toy with Your Child's Safety

Since 1990, legislation has been in place in Ireland which prohibits the placing of toys on the market unless they meet minimum safety requirements. This law is set down in S.I. No 32 of 1990, European Communities (Safety of Toys) Regulation, 1990. There are specific rules in Ireland and the EU to protect children from playing with unsafe toys. Specific rules also exist for ensuring the safety of children's products. For example, baby prams, pushchairs, pacifiers (soothers), cots and clothing. Playthings and equipment such as swings, slides, pencils and pens are also regulated.



The following information should appear on the packaging of the product itself:

- The CE mark
- Name, Trademark and Address of the manufacturer, his agent or importer within the European Union
- Instructions for use, if any
- Advice on the safe use of the toy (such as 'unsuitable for children under 36 months')
- The Irish technical standard mark can be placed on the toy along with the CE mark. This indicates that the toy complies with all safety regulations. The most common Standard for Toys is called IS EN 71

The following guidelines will help you in choosing toys that are safe and appropriate for your children.

Before you Buy

- Inspect the toy and ensure it is well designed and soundly constructed.
- Check for choking hazards. It is illegal for toys (and their parts) that are suitable for children under three years of age to be so small that they can be a choking hazard. As a guide, if a toy or any of its parts can fit into a 35mm camera film canister, don't buy it for a child under 3 years old.
- Look for sharp points or edges on the toy as they can easily injure your child.
- Avoid explosive or projectile toys.
- Toys that have a folding mechanism, such as chairs or toy prams, may contain pinch points that can crush small hands. Ensure there are adequate locking devices to prevent the toy collapsing.
- Be a label reader. Look for and follow age recommendations, instructions for proper assembly.



- Read labels to ensure toys such as paints, crayons or other toys containing liquids and gels are non-toxic.
- Electrical toys should carry the CE mark to ensure compliance with EU safety standards. No electrical toy should be sold (or given out for free) that exceeds 24 volts. All parts of the toy should be properly insulated to prevent a risk of contact with live wires. Safety instructions on electrical toys should be clear and precise.

Safety at Home

- Supervise your child's play and the playing environment
- Immediately remove and discard all packaging before giving the toy to your child
- Explain and demonstrate to your child how to play safely with their new toy
- Keep toys for older children away from young children.
- Care for toys. A damaged or dangerous toy should be repaired or thrown away immediately.
- Store toys safely. Put toys away on shelves or in a toy box after play to prevent trips and falls.

Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Toys

- Newborns – 1 yr old: crib gyms, floor activity centres, activity quilts, squeaky toys, soft dolls or stuffed animals.
- 1 yr – 3 yrs old: soft blocks, large blocks, push and pull toys, books, pounding and shaping toys.
- 3 yrs – 5 yrs old: non-toxic art supplies, pretend toys (i.e. play money, telephone), teddy bears or dolls, outdoor toys (i.e. tricycle and helmet).
- 5 yrs – 9yrs old: arts and crafts kits, puppets, jump ropes, action figures, miniature dolls.
- Ages 9 yrs – 14yrs old: handheld electronic games, board games, sports equipment with protective gear, model kits, musical instruments.

In summary, toys that are poorly built or designed, or toys that are inappropriate for your child's level of development, can cause serious injury and in some cases death. When picking toys, be sure to consider the child's age, interests and skill levels. Adults also need to read product warnings and labels on toys; avoid items with sharp edges and points; look for sturdy construction; quickly discard plastic wrappings after the toy is opened; and keep older children's toys away from younger siblings.

