

Health & Safety for Caregivers

HSC-2-03



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Are Your Toys Safe?

Toys are everywhere. Children love them. Adults even play with them. Are all toys safe? The answer is NO. There are many things to consider when purchasing toys for children. You need to take extra care when selecting toys. Also be sure to consider the age of the child for whom you are purchasing the toy. Look for toys that are well constructed. Be sure to immediately remove and discard the plastic wrap from all toys before it becomes a hazard for the children. Listed below are a few areas that you need to take into consideration.

Sharp Edges

Examine the toy for rough or sharp edges that might harm a child. Watch for toys that have glass as a part of their structure; stay away from these toys. Constantly check toys for broken parts that might have a sharp edge.

Small Parts

Toys that have small parts need to be kept away from small children. A small child could choke on these small pieces. Older toys can break into small pieces that could cause a choking hazard for small children. Be aware of small eyes and noses on toys, especially homemade toys that may have small buttons, etc., on them that the children could chew off and swallow. Balloons when broken or not inflated are a choking hazard for children of all ages.

Cords and Strings

Toys with long cords and strings can be a danger to small children and infants. The cords and/or strings can get wrapped around a child's neck causing strangulation. To prevent this, cut the cord shorter or remove it completely. Never hang toys from a string in a crib or playpen where a child can become entangled and strangle himself.

Loud Toys

Some toys make loud noises that can damage a child's hearing. Be sure to listen to how loud a toy is before letting a child play with it. Choose toys that have soft sounds; children will like them better and so will the adults.

Electric Toys

Electric toys are for older children. If the toys are not properly constructed, they can shock or burn children. Children under eight years of age should not play with electric toys. Electric toys should always be used under adult supervision.

Infant Toys

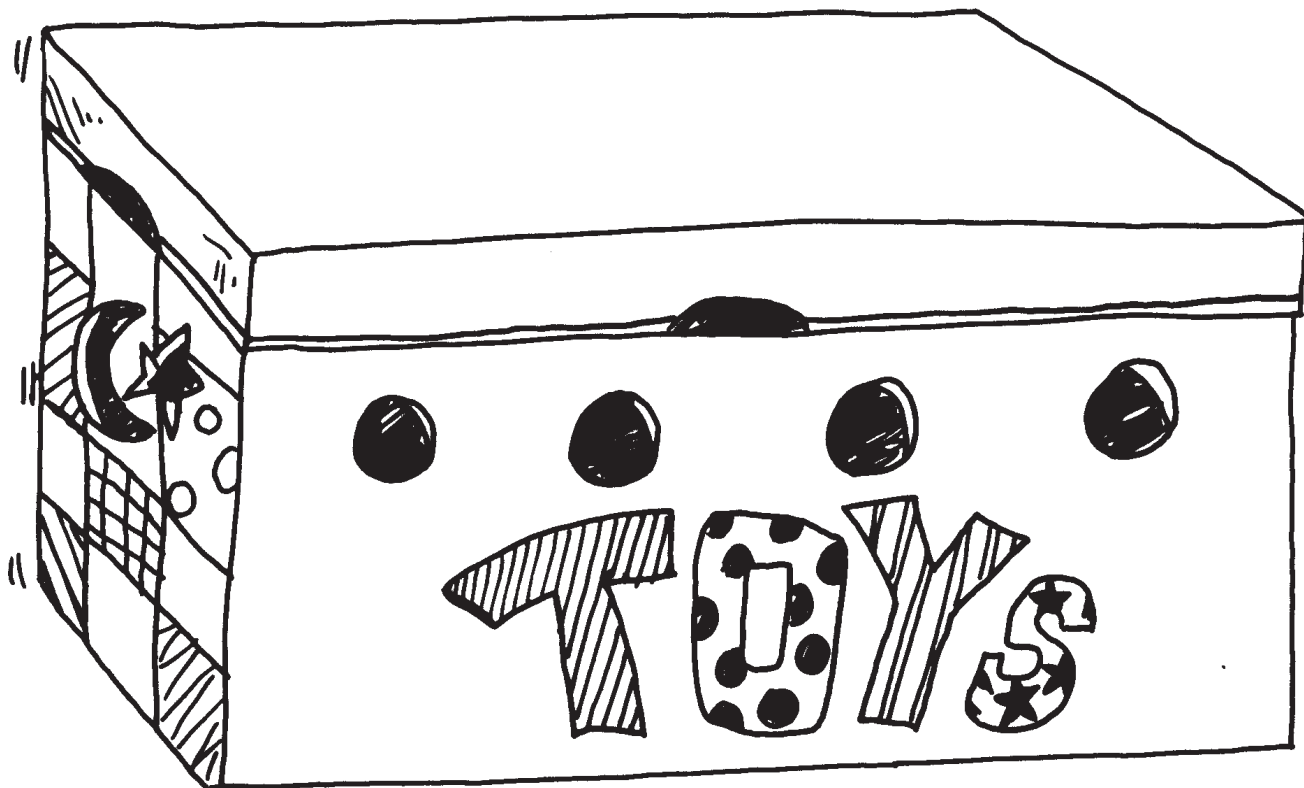
Rattles, squeeze toys, etc., should be large enough not to become lodged in a child's throat. Be sure to wash frequently to remove bacteria and other germs.

Toy Storage

How many of us have tripped and/or fallen over toys? Be sure to teach children to pick up all their toys and place them away on shelves, toy boxes, and/or closets. Toy boxes should have lids that will stay open in any position so the lid does not fall unexpectedly on a child. All toy boxes should have ventilation holes.

Choose Age Appropriate Toys

Choose toys that are appropriate for the age of the child. Read the label for the age recommendation for the toy. Remind older children to keep their toys out of the reach of younger children. Remember toys are to be fun. Use common sense when selecting toys for children. Remember the above items and this will be a good start to a safe toy environment.



*Sources: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, "For Kid's Sake: Think Toy Safety." Washington, D.C.
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, "Which Toy for Which Child." Washington, D.C.*

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