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Safe Kids PA and American Trauma Society, PA Division (ATSPA) Share Toy Safety Tips

Mechanicsburg, Pa. – According to a 2023 U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) report, there were an estimated 154,700 emergency department-treated injuries associated with toys for children 12 years and younger. Devastatingly, 10 of those children died. With approximately 50% of all United States toy purchases made between Black Friday and Christmas, Safe Kids Pennsylvania and The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) offer these tips to ensure everyone will be able to enjoy a safe and happy holiday season.

Toy-Specific Considerations: *“People are going to be buying gifts for everyone in their lives, especially children. To make sure everyone stays safe, it’s important to take the time to think about if the toy is appropriate for the child before you buy it.”* said Jessica Ritter, Safe Kids PA State Office Coordinator

- **Avoid choking hazards.** Don’t buy small bouncy balls, small magnetic toys, or other types of toys with small parts as gifts for young children, as they are choking hazards and can cause internal damage if swallowed. Toys with long strings or cords can pose a risk of strangulation, so make sure that if they are present, they are short and not looped.
- **Know the dangers of button batteries.** According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, more than 2,500 children ingest button batteries every year. Ensure your child’s safety from button battery injuries by keeping a close eye on batteries, gifts, singing greeting cards that require them, as well as other ‘everyday’ items that may have them, like remote controls, watches, hearing aids, key fobs, tea light candles, decorations, and others. Make sure that battery compartments are securely closed and not easily opened without a tool.
- **Buy non-toxic materials:** Since children are known for putting things in their mouths, ensure that any paints, crayons, markers, putty, play clay, etc., are non-toxic. Make sure that there is no lead in the toys and pay close attention to children when they are using these items to prevent ingestion.
- **Know the micromobility laws in PA:** In Pennsylvania, rider age limits differ depending on the e-bike or electric scooter class type, along with where they can be legally operated and ridden. Stay up to date on [micromobility regulations to ensure your child is following the law](#).
- **Buy additional safety gear if necessary.** If gifting a toy like a bicycle or skateboard, make sure to also include appropriate safety gear like a helmet, knee, and elbow pads.

Child and Family Specific Considerations: *Buying gifts for children is a common activity for holiday celebrations and traditions. Krista Brands, ATSPA CEO, adds, "The first steps to ensure their safety are reading the warning labels and purchasing the proper toys."*

- **Always purchase age-appropriate toys.** Take a moment to read the warning label and locate the suggested age range on all toys. Consider whether the toy has small pieces or accessories that could be possible choking hazards, or if it may heat up and require parental supervision to prevent burns. For electronic toys and games, check the content to make sure it's age-appropriate. Safe Kids PA and ATSPA encourage caregivers to also look for toys that encourage education or imagination.
- **Consider allergies and sensory needs.** Before purchasing a toy, be aware of any allergies the child may have to avoid triggering an allergic reaction. Also, consider sensory sensitivities a child may have and avoid toys with loud or sudden noises for children who may experience sensory overload.
- **Consider buying an experience, rather than a toy.** Sometimes, families and children do not have enough space to utilize certain toys safely, or do not really need them. Consider gifting an experience instead, such as an educational trip to the zoo or an art class. Remember, it does not have to be expensive to be memorable.

Additionally, Safe Kids PA and ATSPA suggest that caregivers stay informed about the products their children are using by signing up for recall alerts to avoid child injuries. All toys intended for use by children 12 years of age and under are required by law to be third-party tested and certified to American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards if they were manufactured or imported on or after February 28, 2018. If you're purchasing second-hand toys that are older than that date, you will need to be more aware of various safety concerns. To sign up for recall email alerts, visit www.safekids.org/product-recalls.

To share or learn more information on toy safety, visit www.pasafekids.org/toysafety.

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Safe Kids Pennsylvania (SKPA) is part of Safe Kids Worldwide's global network dedicated to keeping kids safe from preventable childhood injury, which is the number one cause of death among children ages 1 to 19. These injuries range from accidental falls to poisonings, car crashes, drownings, and many other unintentional injuries. SKPA promotes and supports childhood injury prevention activities through education, collaboration, and advocacy throughout Pennsylvania. SKPA is one of many statewide coalitions under Safe Kids Worldwide and is led by the American Trauma Society, PA Division. For more information on Safe Kids PA, visit our official SKPA [website](#) and social media platforms: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division, is a non-profit organization committed to injury prevention and mitigation through education, intervention, and advocacy. Our work includes providing presentations and educational materials on many trauma prevention topics, including concussions, water safety, senior falls, bike safety, traffic safety, and much more. For information, call 717-766-1616 and visit www.atspa.org/