



Safe use

safe products

Toy Safety

Small parts of toys pose a hazard to babies and young children – they can cut, choke, poison or strangle if they are not safe, or not used safely.

Young babies explore their world by putting things in their mouths, but children under three years of age do not have a well-developed coughing reflex and will choke easily on small items.

Always buy toys that are right for your child's age.

Safety Checklist

Remember the “Five S” guide:

Size

The smaller the child, the bigger the toy. Remember that children under three put everything in their mouths, up their noses and in their ears. Also, they can't cough things up if they are under three. So, if a toy is small enough to fit into a container the size of a film canister, or can easily break into small parts, a child under three should not be playing with it.

Surface

Check that paints and fillings aren't toxic because children can be poisoned if they lick or swallow them. Also, check that soft toys are fire resistant and that the fillings can't come out easily and cause a child to choke on them.

Strings

Check that strings or tails on toys are not long enough to cut off a child's circulation. Also check that they are firmly attached to the toy.

Supervision

Small children need close supervision with toys to help prevent accidents from happening. Remember, a supervised child is a safer child.

Smooth

If toys have sharp points or rough edges a child could badly scratch or cut themselves.

Choosing the right toys for their age

0-6 months

- Toys that can be chewed, sucked, and tugged
- Toys should be big enough so the baby can't fit it all in his or her mouth
- **Good choices:** mobiles with interesting shapes and colours (but keep the mobile out of reach); soft toys; rattles.

6 months – 1 year

- Toys that are strong, easily cleaned, and with no detachable parts
- **Good choices:** pull and push toys, floating bath toys, large building bricks or blocks, soft toys, large soft balls, cars and lorries marked safe for under 1s.

2-3 years

- Toys to develop a child's coordination
- **Good choices:** crayons, felt pens, picture books, sorting games, single musical instruments, balls, hand puppets, wheel barrows, slides, sit and ride toys.

3-5 years

- Toys that are used for imaginative games
- **Good choices:** toys to dress up, toy telephones, dolls houses, farm sets, cars, dump trucks, trains, tricycles, costumes, balls, buckets and spades, felt pens, paints, chalk and paper.

5-7 years

- Toys which involve action and imagination
- **Good choices:** skipping ropes, bikes, kites, construction sets, puppets, play sets, musical instruments, modelling materials.

7-10 years

- Children follow their own interests!

More information

The Commerce Commission enforces the Children's Toys Product Safety Standard. You can contact them at:

Phone: 0800 943 600

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Address: PO Box 2351, Wellington

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