

Toy Safety Tips

American Academy of Pediatrics

Giving gifts to children is a favorite part of winter holidays, whether they're wrapped under a tree or exchanged with the lighting of a candle. When choosing a toy for a child, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the toy be appropriate for the child's age and stage of development. This makes it more likely the toy will engage the child – and reduces the risk it could cause injury. Below are some additional tips from the AAP on toy selection and safety:

- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Toys that are too advanced will frustrate your child and may pose safety hazards for younger children.
- When choosing gifts for babies and toddlers, consider toys that will build developmental skills. Toys that can be manipulated, such as shape sorters, stacking blocks, and baby-safe puzzles, are great for developing fine motor, cognitive, and perceptual skills. For more tips on choosing toys for babies, see these [toy selection tips](#) on HealthyChildren.org.
- If you are considering a digital device for a child or teen, such as a tablet, smartphone or game system, think about the purpose of the device and the rules you want to set around its use. For more information, see these tips on [mindful technology use](#), and [healthy digital media use for young children](#).
- Be cautious about toys containing button batteries or magnets. Children can have serious stomach, throat and intestinal problems – including death – after swallowing button batteries or magnets. In addition to toys, button batteries may be in musical greeting cards, remote controls, hearing aids, and other small electronics. Small, powerful magnets may be part of building toy sets. Keep button batteries and magnets away from young children and call your health care provider immediately if your child swallows one.
- To prevent burns and electrical shocks, do not give children under age 10 a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.
- If you are buying a gift for a young child, look for toys without small pieces. Young children can choke on small parts contained in toys or games. Government regulations specify that toys for children under age 3 cannot have parts less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches long. For more, see [How to Buy Safe Toys](#).
- Children can choke or suffocate on broken or uninflated balloons. Do not allow children under age 8 to play with them.

- Remove tags, strings, and ribbons from toys before giving them to young children. Watch for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches long, because they could be a strangulation hazard for babies.
- When your child receives a gift, be sure to read the label and instructions. Warning labels give important information about how to use a toy and what ages it is for. Be sure to show your child how to use the toy.
- Parents should store toys in a designated location, such as on an open shelf or in a bin, and keep older kids' toys away from young children. If you use a toy box, choose one with no lid or a lightweight, non-locking lid and ventilation holes. See [Toy Box Safety](#) on [HealthyChildren.org](#) for more tips.