

Safe giving for kids



Smiles abound when kids open their holiday gifts. And isn't it fun to be part of their excitement?

But it's not fun to see a child hurt or upset by a gift that's harmful or dangerous. As adults, we need to make sure our gifts are safe for our youngsters.

So ask yourself some questions before you make your purchases:

- **Is the toy right for the child's age?** Kids may beg for a specific toy. But it's important to consider whether they're old enough to play safely with it. Many toys have an age range printed right on the packaging. Follow this suggestion to avoid buying toys that may be frustrating — or even potentially harmful.
- **Are any of the toy parts smaller than a toilet paper tube?** A small child could swallow or choke on anything small enough to pass through the cardboard inner tube of a roll of toilet paper.

- **Are there sharp points or edges?** Check the toy — and packaging — for sharp places. These can include staples, twist-ties and molded plastic coverings that can be jagged after opening. It's a good rule of thumb to remove packaging as soon as toys are opened.
- **Does the toy have ribbons, strings or straps?** Any cord longer than seven inches or so can strangle a small child. Beware of such toys.
- **Does the toy plug into an electrical outlet?** Electronic toys can be dangerous if mishandled. Adults should keep a close eye on kids playing with these toys and games.

If you have small children, it's always a good idea to supervise their play. With kids of any age, show them how to play safely with a new toy. Or keep them company as they try it out for the first time. This will give you a chance to see the toy in action and double-check its safety and appropriateness. Plus you'll get to enjoy some special time with your child.

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