

Shopping Tips, Mobile Website Can Help Parents Shop Safe

(Chicago, November 22, 2011) –Dangerous or toxic toys can still be found on America’s store shelves, according to Illinois Public Interest Research Group’s 26

h
annual
Trouble in Toyland
report.

This morning Illinois PIRG, joined by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky and Kids in Danger, released the report at Children’s Memorial Hospital. It reveals the results of laboratory testing on toys for lead and phthalates, both of which have been proven to have serious adverse health impacts on the development of young children. The survey also found toys that pose either choking or noise hazards.

“Choking on small parts, small balls and balloons is still a leading cause of toy-related injury. Between 1990 and 2009 over 200 children have died,” said Brian Imus, state Director for Illinois PIRG. “While most toys are safe, our researchers still found toys on the shelves that pose choking hazards and other toys that contain hazardous levels of toxic chemicals including lead,” he explained.

“Though the Consumer Product Safety Commission has made strides in recent years to address the issue of toy safety, parents should be mindful, especially during this holiday season, that not all toys on the shelves today are safe,” said Rep. Schakowsky. “Unintended injuries are the leading cause of death for young children. We must ensure that deadly toys never make it into our homes and into our children's hands.”

For 26 years, the Illinois PIRG’s *Trouble in Toyland* report has offered safety guidelines for purchasing toys for small children and provided examples of toys currently on store shelves that pose potential safety hazards. The group also provides an interactive website with tips for safe toy shopping that consumers can access on their smart phones at www.toysafety.mobi

Key findings from the report include:

- Toys with high levels of toxic substances are still on store shelves. Two toys contain levels of phthalates – a chemical that poses development hazards for small children -- at 40 and 70 times allowable limits. Several toys violate current allowable lead limits (300ppm). Lead has negative health effects on almost every organ and system in the human body.
- Despite a ban on small parts in toys for children under three, we found toys available in stores that still pose choking hazards.
- We also found toys that are potentially harmful to children's ears and exceed the hearing standards recommended by the National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

In 2008, Congress placed strict limits on concentrations of lead and phthalates in toys and children articles in a law that also gave greater authority and funding to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Imus noted that the CPSC has a new database of both potential hazards and recalled products at saferproducts.gov.

"Parents and toy givers need to remember that while the CPSC is doing a good job, it doesn't test all toys on the shelves. Consumers should also remember that toys that are not on our list of examples could also pose hazards," Imus concluded. "Our new Toy Tips explains the most common toy hazards and our mobile app."

###

Illinois PIRG, the Illinois Public Interest Research Group, takes on powerful interests on behalf of its members, working to win concrete results for our health and our well-being.

Contact:

Contact: Brian Imus, Illinois PIRG, 312-544-4433 x210

Adjoa Adofo, Rep. Schakowsky, 202-225-2111

□