

Fewer Children's Product Recalls

Still Too Many

Child Safety Advocates Seek Mandatory Product Testing

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CHICAGO -- Children's product recalls are on a decline, with fewer recalls last year than in many recent years, but child safety advocates say the back story shows an industry that still lacks the kind of mandatory testing many other industries are required to perform, NBC5's Lisa Parker reported.

The Lamaze Soft Bead Buddies Toy was just one of dozens of children's items recalled last year, this one pulled from shelves after its maker discovered lead in its paint. Some say such recalls are just a bandage on a bigger problem.

"We think recalls are the end result, but the real problem is there is no requirement that those products are tested before they are sold," said Nancy Cowles of Kids In Danger.

The hot-selling yo-yo ball bounced into the spotlight last summer after dozens of complaints of near-strangulation to children.

"It's really a danger and very hard to undo because it's a gluey kind of thing," said Rep. Jan Schakowsky

Schakowsky said the government's recent warning on yo-yo balls doesn't go far enough to remove the danger. She's also the sponsor of legislation that would put in place mandatory testing for durable children's goods "to put some kind of seal of approval that they actually have been tested, that we know that the bottom isn't going to fall out of a crib, that there's not lead paint."

A seal of approval could provide guidance to parents like Richard Kuk, who recently captured on home video his infant pitched forward, gasping for air, in a new Graco Travel Lite Swing.

Target 5 revealed dozens of similar complaints on a product review Web site, but still, there has been no official action by the product's maker.

"This kind of product demonstrates to me there is not adequate safety testing going on," Cowles said.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is investigating the Graco swing because parents like Kuk spoke up.

For its part, the juvenile products industry has said in the past that it promotes safety testing within its membership, but critics say the voluntary self-regulation has not proven safe for little consumers.