

Who is Responsible for Protecting Kids From Unsafe Toys?

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Many parents are up in arms about the recent spate of toy recalls. Dolls, action figures, ride-on toys, even teethingers have been recalled. Lead paint, magnets that can detach, chemicals in plastic that are unsafe... It seems like everyday there's a new recall.

Outside of returning the toys and getting a refund, what can a parent do? Who is responsible for toy safety? Is it enough to buy toys from reputable merchants? Or is there more that parents can do to be sure that their kids aren't victims of unsafe toys?

Ultimately, of course, we as parents are responsible for keeping our kids safe. It's not realistic to think that every toy can be tested for safety, or that every so-called safe toy is safe for every child.

It's so important to make sure that toys are age-appropriate and right for the developmental level of our children. It's our duty as parents to make our decisions about toy buying based on what we feel is right for our child, not what it says on the box or what someone else thinks is appropriate.

/>So it would seem that keeping kids safe is a shared responsibility between manufacturers, parents and government agencies designed to protect consumers. Manufacturers need to produce safe toys so that they will retain the trust of parents, who are the biggest buyers of toys. At the same time, parents need to police their children's toys, stay current on the latest safe toy info and check the recalls frequently.

When there is a recall, it's important that parents don't leave it up to their kids to find and dispose of the recalled toy. For one thing, children might not understand the seriousness of lead paint or magnets that can be swallowed by a younger sibling. They might be very attached to the recalled toy and be unwilling to discard it or give it to their parent.

Parents should go through all of the toys in the house every once in awhile, just to make sure that toys haven't broken or developed sharp surfaces or chipped paint. It's easier to keep track of toys if children are encouraged to have a "place for everything" rather than just throwing all their toys into one large bin. Individual baskets for each type of toy make it easy to go through them quickly.

The bottom line is that we're all responsible for toy safety, but the manufacturers bear the biggest burden, because they profit from the toys. They control the factories and the workers and that means that they are the first line of defense against unsafe toys. When there's a recall, parents will blame them, even if they've outsourced the manufacture of the toy. It behooves them to do a better job of protecting children.

Lill Hawkins blogs about resources for finding safe toys for Toddlers to Teens and maintains a recall list at [How to Find Safe Toys](#)

Check in daily for the latest toy and sports equipment related recalls and a long list of alternative to blah big-box gifts.

Parenting

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