Daycare and Nursery Toy Safety

There are thousands of new toys manufactured every year, all with the goal of providing entertainment for our children. However, many of these toys are designed solely for the intent of entertaining; and safety is not always the priority. Safety should always be a major factor when either purchasing new toys or before accepting donated toys. Besides making sure that any new toys are safe, all existing toys should be periodically inspected to help make certain that the toys remain safe for the children attending the nursery.

The following items should be considered before your church buys or accepts any toys from members:

- Are children allowed to only play with those toys recommended for their age?
    - Most toy manufacturers will provide recommended ages for a specific toy. These age recommendations are typically easy to locate, as they generally are displayed on the packaging of the toys. (See example to the right.)
- Avoid any toys with sharp edges or points.
- Check any small parts on toys to determine if they are securely fastened.
- Only toys specifically designed for outdoor use should be used outdoors.
- Toys made with cloth should carry the labels flame resistant, flame retardant, or nonflammable.
- All broken toys should be repaired back to new condition or thrown away.
- All moving parts should be securely attached.
- There should be no slots or holes that can pinch a child's fingers.
- The toy itself should be big enough that it cannot be put into a child's nose, mouth, or ears. For example, marbles and beads are too small.
- Make sure ride-on toys are well balanced to reduce the chances of them tipping over.
- Toys for older children should be stored in a separate location away from toys for younger children.
- Children should not be allowed to sleep with battery operated toys.



This photo is an example of a toy's packaging showing recommended ages for the toy.



Damaged toys, such as this big wheel, need to be repaired back to their original condition or removed from the play area and thrown away.

- Toys should be periodically cleaned to keep them sanitary.
- The inside of toys should not be filled with a potentially harmful substance like small pellets.
- Toys should not be painted with lead-based paints.
- Have toys and furnishings in the nursery been reviewed to see if they are subject to safety recalls?
    - To look for toy recalls, visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission website at https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls



Example Recalled Toy

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recalled the Curious George 12-inch plush dolls because the surface paint on the toy's plastic face and construction hat contain excessive levels of lead, which violates the federal lead paint standard.

Toys that did not meet the federal guidelines regarding lead paint levels were among the highest reasons for recall.

Photo courtesy of CPSC.

Toy Safety is Important

In an effort to protect the safety of children, it's important to inspect all toys before purchasing them or accepting donated toys from members to put in the religious organization's play areas. Don't just look for toys that will be entertaining for children but look for ones that do not pose any harm.

Protecting the children of your congregation should be a top priority for church leaders. You can begin your protection efforts by ensuring that the toys and equipment that is available to children are safe.

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