

Child Safety and Toys

Advice from the Child Safety Awareness Programme (CSAP)

Toys can provide endless hours of entertainment and fun but we do need to be careful about our choices. **Take action now:**

- Only buy or use toys which have the **CE** safety mark on the toy or on its packaging.
- Remove all packaging from the toy and dispose of it carefully so that it is out of sight and reach of your child. Remember packaging can be a choking and suffocation danger.
- Before using a toy, make sure it is suitable for the child's age and developmental stage – is there a younger child in the house who may be at danger if he/she plays with the toy?
- Be aware that older children may share unsuitable toys with younger children.
- Make sure toys are in good condition – throw out any which are broken.
- Avoid trips and falls:
 - When not in use, toys should be stored neatly in an area that will allow free movement through rooms.
 - Store toys where children do not need to climb to reach them.

Advice from the National Consumer Agency

- Before you buy a toy:
 -  Does it have the **CE** mark? Never buy a toy that does not have the **CE** mark on the toy or its packaging.
 -  Is there a warning about the age group the toy is suitable for?
 -  Make sure the toy you buy is suitable for the child's age.
 -  Are there younger children in the house who might be in danger if they play with the toy?
 -  Are there clear and precise safety instructions and are any hazards brought to your attention?
- When you get home:
 -  Read the instructions, paying attention to any danger warnings. Keep them in a safe place.
 -  Remove all packaging and discard it safely – do not allow children to play with plastic packaging as there is danger of suffocation or choking.
 -  Are there any small parts that can be taken off and that could lodge in ears, nose or throat?
 -  Does the toy fire bullets or items that could be dangerous?
 -  Are there sharp edges or any nails or screws sticking out?
 -  Are there any broken or missing parts?
 -  Are "sit and ride toys" stable?
 -  Could fold up toys trap little fingers?
 -  If the toy uses batteries, are they in a sealed area that a child can't open?
 -  Is there information about the flammability of materials in the item – for instance, are the materials flame resistant?
 -  If it is intended to make noise, does it seem too loud?
 -  Are there strong or strange smells from the item. If there are, it could mean that the toy might contain a lot of chemicals.



The CE Mark and Toys

- Any toy placed on the market (including free giveaways) in Ireland and the rest of the European Union (EU), must carry a **CE** mark. The **CE** mark will be attached to the product itself or on its packaging in a way that is easy to see, easy to read and cannot be rubbed off.
- There may also be the 'EN71' mark on a toy.
- Both the EN71 and **CE** marks show that the toy complies with safety regulations and that it is safe as long as it is not abused and is used as intended.



Playthings

- Playthings, such as sports equipment and fashion jewellery for children, do not have to carry the CE mark. This is because a 'plaything' is seen as being different from a toy. It is covered by the General Product Safety Directive.
- However, if something is intended for children, or is likely to be used by them, it must be made to as high a standard as a toy.
- Always check toys and playthings for the following:
 - **Strength** - the product is strong and resilient - so it won't break easily.
 - **Flammability** – the product is made of materials that do not burn easily.
 - **Suitable** - make sure the items are suitable. Some children, particularly those under three, are more vulnerable and less able than older children to cope with particular toys.
 - **Appropriate for the age** - pay attention to the 'minimum-age' warnings. These are often good guides to whether or not you should buy the toy for your child, as they show the producer's idea of who should use it.
 - **Bicycles and go-karts** - there should be adequate brakes and guards for chains and other moving parts. If bicycles are being used on public roads, they should carry adequate lighting and meet the requirements of the Road Traffic Acts.
 - **Electrical toys** - be particularly careful if you are buying a toy with electrical parts or a transformer. No electrical toy that is more than 24 volts may be sold or given as a free gift in Ireland. Electrical toys must be properly insulated and protected to prevent a risk of contact with live wires. Make sure safety instructions are clear and precise and read them carefully.
 - **Small parts** - a child's product that contains detachable or small parts should be marked as 'Not suitable for children under 36 months'.
 - **Other hazards** - any possible danger that exists should be pointed out on the packaging. In some products, children's fingers can easily become trapped by moving parts, for example, toys that fold or cots that have hinges and clasps.
 - **Reputable seller** - buy the product from a shop with a good reputation. If you are buying toys from a market, jumble sale or car boot sale, take extra care.
 - **Labelling information** - always check the label or packaging for the name, address or trademark of the manufacturer, their agents or importer within the EU; instructions for use, if needed; advice on the safe use of the product.

Safety Warning – magnetic toys:

- All toys containing magnets must display a warning regarding possible health and safety risks posed by magnets if swallowed by children.
- The warning should also advise that if your *child swallows a magnet* you should *seek immediate medical help* for them.

Further information

- Get more tips from the National Consumer Agency by visiting www.nca.ie.
- For further advice on child safety, visit www.hse.ie/childsafety.

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