

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:
Prevent Blindness America
Sarah Hecker
(312) 363-6035

TOY SAFETY A MAJOR CAUSE FOR CONCERN FOR PARENTS AND GIFT-GIVERS THIS YEAR

National Non-Profit Group Provides Toy Safety Tips to Help Protect Children

CHICAGO (Nov. 27, 2007) – With the recent focus on toy safety and the holiday shopping season already in full swing, parents need to be aware of what they can do to make sure the gifts their children receive this year will not require a trip to the emergency room. Beyond poisoning from lead paint, some toys pose other dangers to children, including choking hazards and permanent vision loss.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated that 202,300 children were treated in the emergency room for toy-related injuries in 2005, the most recent data available. And, 7,820 of those injuries were to the eyes. Eye injuries consisted of lacerations, abrasions and foreign bodies.

Prevent Blindness America has designated December as Safe Toys and Gifts Month in an effort to provide safety tips to all those buying gifts for children this year. Toys, sporting equipment and even art supplies can be harmful to kids if they are not used properly.

“We all want to make sure our children have the best holiday ever and receive whatever gift they are wishing for. But, unfortunately, the toy that is on top of their wish list may not be the most appropriate for their age and development level,” said Daniel D. Garrett, senior vice president of Prevent Blindness America. “We all need to make an effort to take every safety precaution to protect our kids.”

The group suggests the following tips to help make this holiday season a safe one for children:

- Inspect all toys before purchasing. Monitor toys that your child has received as gifts to make sure they are appropriate for your child’s age and development level.
- Gifts of sports equipment should always be accompanied by protective gear (such as a basketball along with eye goggles). The American Academy of Ophthalmology estimates that there are 40,000 sports-related eye injuries each year.

-More-

Prevent Blindness America Cautions Parents on Potential Toy Dangers

Page 2

- Any toy that is labeled “supervision required” must always be used in the presence of an adult.
- Make recommendations to family members and friends about gifts that you feel are appropriate for your child.
- Always save the warranties and directions for every toy.
- Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off. BB guns and air guns should not even be considered toys.
- Inspect toys for sturdiness. Your child’s toys should be durable with no sharp edges or points. The toys should also withstand impact.
- Look for the letters “ASTM.” This means the product meets the national safety standards set by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).
- Don’t give toys with small parts to young children. Young kids tend to put things in their mouths, increasing the risk of choking. If the part of a toy can fit in a toilet paper roll, the toy is not appropriate for children under the age of 3.
- Repair or throw away damaged toys.
- Keep toys meant for older children away from younger ones.
- Remain aware of recalled products. For further information on toy and product recalls, visit the U.S. Product Safety Commission Web site at www.cpsc.gov.

For more information on safe toys and gifts, please visit www.preventblindness.org or call 1-800-331-2020.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, it's committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020 or visit us on the Web at www.preventblindness.org.