



Appropriate toys save parents a lot of worry.



JERRY CAMMARATA FATHER'S DIARY

Toys should bring joy, not tears

The only limitations in making toys today seems to be in the limitations of the creative minds of toy inventors. Toys have the power to explode apart upon impact, pierce or cut through the hardest of substances, cook a meal, sew a dress and generally bring pleasure to our children who cannot do without them.

In many cases reported each year, however, toys bring more than pleasure to youngsters. They bring pain, hurt and illness.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission works very hard to educate parents on what information they should be giving to their children. When my family and I visited Washington, D.C. recently, we stopped at the offices of the Commission and learned that there are some basic guidelines of toy play which will give you years of fun and merriment from dolls, gas stations, pogo sticks, bean bags and the like.

Each toy made is designed for a particular age group. You should know the abilities and interests of your children and buy a toy that is appropriate. Be careful to read every word on the box, label or direction book. Stay away from products with toxic paints or possible allergenic materials.

Keep the toys and other parts big enough so children cannot stuff them in their mouths. Look the product over completely and determine if you

could get hurt in any way. If so, move on down the aisle of the toy store and make another selection.

You've looked all over for your child and just could not find him or her. Friends of mine looked for their son, Ralph, just last week and for 20 minutes could not find him. Ralph decided to sit in his toy chest and play cowboy and indians. The door came down on his head and gave him a mild concussion that resulted in his blacking out for a short time.

Fortunately for Ralph his Dad already thought about the worst and had drilled numerous one inch holes in the toy chest in case of such an accident. Ralph was able to breathe. When he came to, his cry alerted his Mom and Dad and medical care was sought. Now Ralph has a lighter cover on his toy chest so that such an accident doesn't happen again.

How often have we put together a model car with all of the trimmings and unfortunately left it in the very unlikely place of under a rocker. Within seconds of our Dad sitting in the rocker. The car is shattered into pieces and as you put the car in your hands you get a piece of pointed plastic in your finger.

The point of this situation is never to have points or sharp edges ever appear on toys. Sharp edges should be smoothed out and dangerous

projections covered with plastic tips. If the manufacturer has not taken the precaution to make a toy with smooth edges then the manufacturer doesn't deserve your business.

Anything that can shake, rattle and roll is smaller than three inches should not be given to your very young child. All too often children swallow their little rattles or if the rattle should break, the beads inside of it. We must also consider the harmful effects of inhaling a small piece of toy and having it become stuck in the back of the nose. Pieces of toys are also reportedly found in children's ears. The right, safe toy is the best.

The more sophisticated our kids become the more they demand of toy manufacturers and the more they get. You have an electric stove and I guess it stands to reason then that your little son or daughter should have his or her very own electric stove. The toy electric stove can make cookies and warm milk. Electricity can be of use, however, in the hands of a young novice chef—the experience could be shocking if not electrifyingly fatal. Check all wires of electrical games and train your child in plugging and unplugging wires and using caution.

Our children derive many hours of pleasure from their toys. Foremost in our minds, however, is the thought they are accepting of their toys as learning tools. Each learning tool must meet your standards of appropriateness and safety. If you have any questions about the safety of toys your child now has use the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Hot Line Number, 1-800-638-2666.