



factsheet

Child's Play!

Play is an essential part of every child's life, so say RoSPA (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents). Through play children investigate and learn about the world around them. Using and playing with toys is one of the ways they can do this allowing them to grow and develop socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually.

Unfortunately, play is not without its risks. Although toys are involved in 30,000 accidents each year, their safety is only part of the problem because by law they must satisfy stringent safety requirements. Most accidents involving toys occur when people trip over them and when babies play with toys intended for older children.

Toys and the law

The Toys Safety Directive [88/378/EEC] was introduced into British law by the Toys (Safety) Regulations 1995 [SI 204] under the Consumer Protection Act 1987, and lists the essential safety requirements in terms of general principles and particular risks.

European Standard EN71 provides an interpretation of the legal requirements, covering such issues as flammability, toxicity, mechanical and physical properties.

RoSPA's top ten safety tips:-

- Buy toys only from recognised outlets
- Make sure the toy is suitable for the child, check the age range
- Be particularly careful with toys for children under three
- Remember younger children play with older children's toys
- Check for loose hair and small parts, sharp edges and points
- Check garden swings and slides are robust and do not present a risk of strangulation
- Check toys for wear and repair or dispose of carefully where necessary
- Keep the play area tidy
- Follow instructions and warnings where provided
- Supervise children.