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For Immediate Release

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ATSPA and Safe Kids PA Talk Toy Safety Ahead of Holiday Season

Mechanicsburg, Pa. – According to a U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) report, 226,000 toy-related injuries were reported in 2018. The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) and Safe Kids Pennsylvania want to ensure a merry and safe holiday season. Approximately 50 percent of all United States toy purchases are made between Black Friday and Christmas.

“Adults everywhere are about to embark on the country’s busiest toy-buying season,” said Jessica Ritter, Safe Kids Pennsylvania State Office Coordinator. “Taking the time to make sure toys and gifts are developmentally and age appropriate is the best way to ensure a happy holiday season.”

“Our children are some of the most important people in our lives,” said Krista Brands, ATSPA CEO. “The first step to ensure their safety is reading the warning labels and purchasing the proper toys.”

ATSPA and Safe Kids PA offer these tips to ensure safe gift giving this year:

1. **Consider the child’s age and ability when purchasing a toy or game.** Take a moment to read the warning label and locate the suggested age range. This information is put on toy packaging to help ensure the safety of children. Small game pieces or accessories can be a choking hazard for children and pets. Toys that heat up may need parental supervision to avoid burns. Does your child often put things in their mouth? Do they touch what they are not supposed to? Is your child typically allowed to use scissors or a safety knife? Ultimately, just because a toy says 5 and up does not mean that all 5-year-olds are ready for that type of play.
2. **Pay attention to gifts needing batteries.** According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, more than 2,500 children ingest button batteries every year. Keep a close eye on batteries and gifts or cards that require them. These include remote controls, singing greeting cards, watches, hearing aids, children’s toys, key fobs, tea light candles, flashing holiday jewelry, decorations, and many other everyday items.
3. **Consider toxicity.** Children are known for putting things in their mouth. Ensure that any paints, crayons, markers, puddy, play clay, etc. are non-toxic. Make sure that there is no lead in the toys. Pay close attention to children when they are using these items to prevent ingestion.
4. **Consider accessories that promote safety.** Gifts of sports equipment should always be accompanied by protective gear. So, give a helmet with the skateboard, padding with the hockey equipment, a brightly colored jacket or top with new running shoes!



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5. **After play time is over, use a bin or container to store toys for next time.** Make sure there are no holes or hinges that could catch little fingers. Also, ensure that all parts and pieces make their way into the bin before being put away. Older children may have gotten toys with smaller parts, so put them away when not in use. Loose Legos can be swallowed by children or pets or stepped on and cause falls.
6. **Be informed about products.** Look for labels that assure you the toys have passed a safety inspection – “ASTM” means the toy has met the American Society for Testing and Materials standards. Check for any recalls - Safe Kids makes it easy for you by sending an e-mail alert twice a month. Parents can sign up at www.safekids.org/product-recalls.

Additionally, ATSPA and Safe Kids PA suggest parents and guardians do the following to keep children safe:

- Read instructions and warnings on the packaging.
- Listen to toys that make noise to be sure the sound will not frighten the child.
- Inspect all toys for safe construction.
- Demonstrate how to use the toy safely.
- Provide supervision.

More information on safe toys is available at www.pasafekids.org or by calling (717) 766-1616.

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The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division is a non-profit organization committed to trauma prevention and mitigation through education and advocacy. Our work includes providing presentations and educational materials on many trauma prevention topics, including concussions, water safety, senior falls, bike safety, traffic safety and much more. For information, call 717-766-1616 and visit www.atspa.org.

Safe Kids Pennsylvania is an organization dedicated to the prevention of and education around unintentional childhood injuries, which are the number one killer of children throughout the USA. These injuries range from accidental falls, poisonings, car crashes and child passenger safety, drowning, and many more. Safe Kids Pennsylvania is one of many statewide coalitions under Safe Kids Worldwide, and is led by the American Trauma Society, PA Division. For more information on Safe Kids PA, visit our website at <https://www.pasafekids.org/> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/safekidspa/>.