

Toy Safety for Parents of Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs (CYSHCN)

Toy safety is a commonly overlooked, yet still important consideration for parents of children and youth with special healthcare needs (CYSHCN). According to Safe Kids Worldwide, 174,100 children were treated in Emergency Rooms for toy-related injuries in 2016; nearly half of which were children under the age of 5 ([Safe Kids Worldwide Toy Safety Tips, 2018](#)). Additionally, they recommend several main considerations for parents to think about when it comes to toy safety:

- Consider your child's age and development when selecting appropriate toys.
- Read the manufacturer's label, regarding suggested age and choking hazards.
- Keep play areas cleaned up to prevent trips and falls.
- Consider the safety of toy storage bins and containers.
- Require children to wear helmets when using riding toys. For additional information on bike and helmet safety, please see Indiana Family to Family's Bike Safety Fact Sheet.
- Register your child's toys for recall information, and follow toy recall information. Parents can find the latest toy safety recalls by searching [Safe Kids World Wide's Product Recall](#) page.

When considering which toys to purchase for your child with special healthcare needs, experts agree that it's important to consider your child's abilities and development, as well as any behavioral issues that might be relevant. Although the manufacturer's recommended age range can serve a helpful guide in toy selection, parents should also carefully look at the product itself to determine if it is appropriate for their child. Parents of young children or of older children who still mouth items should look closely for any small or loose parts that may be or become a choking hazard. Additionally, parents should look for loose strings or cords that could cause entrapment. For more information on purchasing toys, the AAP has created a guide on [Toy Buying Tips for Children with Special Needs](#).

In addition to selecting safe and appropriate toys for CYSHCN, it's also important for parents to provide appropriate supervision while their child plays. Parents should also consider the safety of their child's play environment. It's important to keep play areas cleaned up to prevent trips and falls. All shelves and large furniture in the room should be secured to the wall. More information on preventing tip-overs can be found in the guide: [TV and Furniture Tip-Over Prevention Tips](#) (Safe Kids Worldwide, 2018). Parents may also want to consider checking their child's toy storage bins and containers for potential hazards, such as entrapment or pinching fingers and hands.

Another option for parents of CYSHN to consider is adaptive or modified toys. The Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK) has created a comprehensive guide on [Toy Tips: Ideas and Options for Children with Special Needs](#), which includes information on both adaptive toys and appropriately modifying toys, books, and art supplies.

The Safety Store at Riley Children's Hospital offers low-cost safety products to families, including bicycle helmets and home safety products. Safety Store employees are trained educators, and they can provide families with safety advice, product suggestions, and educational materials. Families can contact The Safety Store online (<https://safetystore.iu.edu/>) or at 317-275-6565. Additionally, The Safety Store website has many topic-specific educational resources available to parents.

For additional toy safety tips and ideas, visit our [Indiana Family to Family's Pinterest Safety Board](#).

Programs and systems change often. It is important to ensure that you are using the most current information. This fact sheet was updated October 2023. Please check <https://www.inf2f.org/fact-sheets.html> for the most recent edition.

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