

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for December 4, 2023
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk safe toys, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

I'll admit that I have a fondness for Saturday Night Live. Now, I haven't really watched the show much since I was in college. Most of my favorite sketches are from the 80s and 90s. But I always loved watching the rerun shows of the classics from the 70s as well.

One iconic holiday sketch shows Dan Akroyd as Irwin Mainway, president of Mainway Toys, defending his company's dangerous products aimed at children. Reporter Candice Bergen with "Consumer Probe" questions the safety of their best-selling toys including "Bag O'Glass".

It makes me wonder just how we are doing now almost 50 years later. December is National Safe Toys and Gifts Month. Regulations have increased in recent years to help protect children from different types of dangers associated with toys. The Child Safety Protection Act of 1994 required that toys for children ages 3 to 6 be labeled with choking hazard warnings if they contain small parts.

The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 gave the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) the power to accelerate recalls for dangerous toys. It also opened the door to wider enforcement of toy safety standards, to ban some toxic substances, and to set limits on other toxic substances.

In 2021, over 150,000 toy-related injuries for children 14 and under were treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments. That is one ER trip almost every three minutes. About one-third of the injuries were classified as lacerations or contusions/abrasions, and almost half were to the head and face area. Boys accounted for 58% of the injuries.

Here are some tips from CPSC and SafeKids.org.

Choose toys with care by considering your child's age and development when purchasing a toy or game. Keep in mind the child's interests and skill level. Read the instructions and warning labels to make sure it is appropriate for your child. When toy manufacturers list "Not recommended for children under three" on a package, it is there for good reason.

Look for other safety labels including: “Flame retardant/ Flame resistant” on fabric products and “Washable/ hygienic materials” on stuffed toys and dolls. Make sure that all instructions are clear.

And don’t forget a helmet for a new bike, skateboard, scooter, or any other riding equipment.

It can be a challenge, but from a safety standpoint, it is important to encourage our children to put toys away when they are not playing with them. Teach children to put their toys safely away on shelves or in a toy chest to prevent trips and falls. Toy boxes, bins, and containers should be checked for safety. Examine these for holes or hinges that could catch little fingers. Use a toy chest that has a lid that will stay open in any position to which it is raised and will not fall unexpectedly on a child. For extra safety, be sure there are ventilation holes for fresh air.

Check all toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards. Edges on wooden toys can become sharp, and any splinters should be sanded smooth. As you are putting away outdoor toys for the season, this is a good time to check for rust or weak parts that could become hazardous. It is helpful to have indoor storage for toys used outdoors as rain or dew can rust or damage a variety of toys and toy parts creating hazards.

And now let’s see what’s new from OSU Extension: 2024 programming plans are underway. The next series of ServSafe Manager training will be in February. Be on the lookout for more details in the next few weeks.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!