



Toy Safety

It is important to be aware of safety standards when buying products or toys for children. There are rules in Ireland and the EU to protect children from playing with unsafe toys. . Most of these rules are based on the standards which are developed by the European Committee for standardisation (CEN). The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) develops standards governing safety, quality, design, performance etc. of specific products for sale in Ireland.

Legislation prohibits the placing of toys on the market unless they meet minimum safety requirements.

CE In addition, EU rules state that any product offered for sale in the EU that conforms with certain specific health, safety and environmental protection standards must carry a CE mark. The CE mark is a declaration by the producer that the product conforms to all the applicable EU legislation.

The following are some basic guidelines when buying safe products and toys. Items should be:

- Strong and resilient
- Made of materials that do not burn easily
- Made of non-toxic material
- Carry the CE Mark

A child's product that contains detachable or small parts should be marked as unsuitable for children under 36 months. Any specific hazard that exists should be drawn to your attention. (e.g. children's fingers can easily become trapped by a moving parts).

The Consumers' Association of Ireland (CAI)

The Consumers Association carried out a project to assess how safe the toys we give our children are, entitled '*A Safe Toy is a Good Playmate*'.

They carried out a nationwide survey to find what Irish consumers look for when purchasing toys, and whether they take the required precautions to guarantee the safety of the final users. They purchased a variety of toys, found in a range of shops, and had these tested according to EU toy legislation to determine how safe they are.

76% of those surveyed do not check for the CE Mark and 25% of parents whose children play with toys with moveable parts (bicycles, skateboards etc.) never supervise this type of play. 96% of parents of children under 3 years of age admitted that there is not always an adult present when their child is at play;

43% of toys tested for Mechanical and Physical Properties did not conform to the safety standard. 33% of toys tested for Electrical Properties did not conform to the safety standard and 75% of toys that failed did so due to their 'Warming Properties'.

Fortunately, all of the toys tested complied with flammability standards.



Buyer Beware (Caveat Emptor)

Childminders should take responsibility for the toys they give to children. Safety aspects of toys should be your biggest concern when buying.