

Toy Shopping Checklist for Families

When shopping for the little ones in your life, you can rest assured that toys sold by legitimate retailers and brands comply with over 100 strict federal safety standards and tests.

On the other hand, counterfeit, imitation, and knockoff “toys” are unlikely to adhere to federal safety standards, and can pose a serious risk to kids. Avoid bringing them into your home by following these important tips.

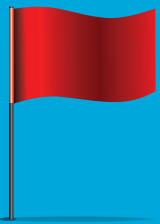


Before purchasing a toy, whether online or in stores, be sure to check and follow the age grading on the packaging or in the online description.

Age labels aren't about how smart your child is—it's safety guidance that's based on the developmental skills and abilities of children at a given age, and the specific features of a toy.

Pay special attention to toys labeled **3+** since they may contain small parts that can be a choking hazard for children under 3, or those who still mouth toys.

When shopping online, your best bet is to visit the toy brand's website and either purchase directly from the site or follow links to an official retailer to purchase.



Can't find a website?

That may be a red flag that you are dealing with an illicit seller.

Check product reviews and images.

If a product's reviews are negative, or if there aren't many, it's a clue it could be a fake.

Poorly photoshopped pictures, typos, or spelling mistakes in the online description or packaging are other clues that the product could be illegitimate, and therefore unsafe.



Be vigilant when buying from international sellers.

For products shipped directly from international sellers, check seller ratings.

You can generally identify international shipments based on how long it takes for a product to get to you.

If you do receive a product that you believe is fake, contact your credit card company.

Not only will you get a refund, if there are numerous complaints, the fraudulent seller can be identified by the credit card company who will in turn stop working with them.



Inspect the product and packaging when it arrives to not only make sure it meets expectations, but also to check for broken or damaged parts that may break off and pose choking hazards.

If you still aren't sure, contact the original brand's customer service.



They will gladly help ensure that you have the real thing!

Can't find a toy on your child's wishlist?

Wait for a trusted retailer to restock the product.

Buying fake or cheaper alternatives is just not worth the risk.



Ahead of playtime, parents should always read the instructions for assembly and use.

For children that are too young to read, demonstrating how to play with a toy is the best way to make sure they understand how to safely enjoy it.



For more helpful safety tips, visit [PlaySafe.org](https://www.play-safe.org), The Toy Association's trusted resource for parents and caregivers.