



W. A. T. C. H.
world against toys causing harm, inc.



**Franciscan Hospital
for Children**

*A National Leader In Caring for Children
with Special Health Care Needs*

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World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.),

is a non-profit organization working to educate the public about child safety. W.A.T.C.H. helps raise awareness about the dangers lurking in many toys, children's products, and recreational activities. Safety conferences, the annual "10 Worst Toys" nominees, and multi-dimensional educational programs are some of the ways W.A.T.C.H. continues the fight to protect our children. Many tragic incidences can drop significantly with education. As a result of W.A.T.C.H.'s efforts, thousands of children's products have been redesigned and recalled helping to create a safer environment for children.

ON TUESDAY, JUNE 3

Attorney Edward M. Swartz, founder and President of World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.), and Attorneys James A. Swartz and Joan E. Siff, Directors of W.A.T.C.H., provide tips on keeping children safe this summer. Included at the conference will be a "State of the Industry" update with a special focus on recent safety measures taken to protect children (legislation, toy safety trends, recalls) and summer recreational products to avoid. Hospital emergency departments will treat about 2.7 million children injured in accidents this summer. The conference will address safety precautions children should take to make summer more enjoyable for everyone.

With warm weather comes the chance to enjoy the outdoors...however, outdoor play can turn tragic without proper safety precautions.

**June 3
10:00am - 11:00am
Franciscan Hospital
for Children
30 Warren Street
Boston, MA**

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World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.) presents

***Safe Fun
in the Sun***

Press Conference:
"State of the Industry" Update
(Legislation, Toy Safety Trends, Recalls) and **Tips on Summer Safety**
June 3, 2008 10:00 AM

**with a special
focus on recent
safety measures
to protect children
and summer recreational
products to
avoid**

Hosted by Franciscan Hospital for Children, 30 Warren Street, Boston, MA

This Summer WATCH OUT For...

WATER SAFETY: POOLS, SPAS, HOT TUBS

- Summer afternoons by the beach or pool can turn tragic instantly. Drowning is the *2nd largest* killer of children under 5 from unintentional injuries.
- Children that know how to swim can still drown and need supervision. *Flotation devices* can provide a false sense of security to children and caregivers. Rafts and other large water toys can obstruct the view of children in need of help.
- *Drowning is often silent*—there may be no screaming or splashing to draw the attention of an adult.
- *Beware of shallow water*, such as unattended *baby pools or buckets* filled with water, that can present an unexpected drowning hazard (young children can drown in as little as 2 inches of water).

SWIMMING POOLS

- *Always look for a missing child in the pool first*—every second counts to prevent injuries from drowning. Most pool drownings occur after a child was *last seen in the house* and was out of sight for less than 5 minutes.
- Each year, about 280 children under 5 drown in backyard pools. There were 3,703 near-drowning related injuries to children under 5 in swimming pools in 2006.
- Multiple barriers of protection and constant supervision are a necessity for pool safety.
- Quadriplegia and paralysis have resulted when swimmers dive into *aboveground pools* or hit the bottom or sides of in-ground pools.

INFLATABLE POOLS

- Between 2004 and 2006, there were 47 reported deaths to children involving inflatable pools (which can range in size from small baby pools to larger recreational pools intended for both children and adults).
- Many inflatable pools, which are easy to assemble and often not subject to local building codes requiring barriers, are used without the layers of safety considerations (such as fences and alarms) found around permanent pools.

HOT TUBS AND SPAS

- Over 800 deaths have occurred in spas and hot tubs since 1990.
- Suction from drains in swimming pools, spas and wading pools have caused many deaths and severe, irreversible injuries when hair or body parts become entrapped.
- Since 1990, there have been 121 incidents of body part and hair entrapment (including injuries such as disembowelment) resulting in 25 deaths in hot tubs, whirlpools and spas.

IN-LINE SKATES, SKATEBOARDS, AND SCOOTERS

- *Protective gear (with the exception of wrist guards for scooters) should be worn while using these products.* Failure to wear protective gear contributes to the ever-increasing number of injuries, including fractures and dislocations, from in-line skates, skateboards and scooters.
- Many children have been injured as a result of using these trendy, lightweight products each year. In 2006, thousands of children under 15 were injured: 37,574 injuries from non-motorized scooters, 65,130 injuries from skateboards, and 18,712 injuries from inline skating.

BICYCLES

- *Always wear a helmet.* Children should learn from the time they ride their first bicycles that helmets are synonymous with safety. Helmets should be used without exception for bicycles and other wheeled activities (scooters, skateboards, in-line skates, etc). Failure to wear a helmet can lead to serious injury or death—proper use of a helmet can *reduce the likelihood of head injury up to 85%*.
- *Over 900 people die each year in biking accidents (90% are not wearing helmets).* Of the over 200 children that die each year from bicycle related injuries, *60% involve a head injury.* In 2006, nearly 240,000 children under 15 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for bicycle related injuries. There were 77 fatalities to children under 15 in 2004.

POCKET/MINI BIKES

- These popular motorized “mini bikes” are often marketed and sold to children yet have the power to cause fatal or debilitating injuries.
- Usually sitting less than two feet high, mini bikes and other low profile riding toys may not be visible to motorists.
- In 2003, an estimated 2,345 people visited hospital emergency rooms for injuries relating to motorized mini bikes.

TOY ALERTS

- Dangerous toys are a year-round concern. In the short six month period since W.A.T.C.H.’s most recent “10 Worst Toy” conference, there have been at least thirty-seven (37) toy recalls representing well over three million six hundred thousand (3,600,000) units of dangerous toys polluting the marketplace. The staggering number of toy recalls clearly indicates a broken system that needs fixing before more children are harmed.
- In 2006 alone, there were 16 toy-related deaths and each year there are an estimated 200,000 toy-related injuries.
- Many of the recalls issued were the result of lead and small parts violations—both hazards are well known by manufacturers and have no place in children’s products.
 - *Lead can cause permanent, irreversible injuries* such as growth and behavioral problems, learning disabilities, and death. In a 12-month period between 2006 and 2007, toxic toys with excessive lead content accounted for at least thirty (30) toy recalls representing over five million (5,000,000) units.
 - *Check toys for small or loose parts.* Millions of *magnetic building sets* and other magnetic toys have been recalled because tiny magnets can fall out and be swallowed by young children. The magnets can attach to each other in a child’s intestine causing fatal perforation or blockage. Small magnets are responsible for 52 incidents, including 1 death, 19 surgeries, and many more severe injuries.
- Rigid, plastic parts and sharp points on water toys and other playthings pose a risk of laceration and puncture wounds (in 2004 a toy car was recalled when its rigid plastic parts caused at least 14 injuries including lacerations).
- “Super” water guns have caused eye and other injuries to children due to the force with which they eject water.

- Other injuries may occur when water is substituted with other liquids that may be caustic.
- Dive sticks (hard, plastic, weighted water toys) could potentially impale children who fall on the upright sticks in the water (in 2005, 180,000 packages of one brand of dive stick were recalled for this reason).

HEELYS – SHOES WITH WHEELS

- As the popularity of Heelys (roller shoes) continues to soar, so does the number of injuries to children. Concussions, fractures and lacerations are some of the possible injuries that could occur.
 - Between September 2005 and December 2006 there were at least 64 injuries and 1 death from roller shoes.
- While the manufacturers have cautioned, “Heelys skate shoes can be dangerous,” manufacturers and retailers market Heelys to *youths who are unprepared for the risks associated with this product.* In 2006, a boy died while wearing his Heelys when a car hit him.
- Although many youths may wear Heelys as a “cool” fashion accessory, Heelys present risks of injuries similar to other sporting products with wheels and they should be used with the same safety precautions as these products—including helmets, elbow pads, wrist guards, gloves, knee pads, and padded clothing.
- Heelys are worn in environments, such as schools, malls and near streets, which increase the risk of injury (numerous school districts and retail establishments have banned Heelys due to safety concerns).

CAMPFIRES, BACKYARD STOVES, GRILLS

- *Never burn charcoal inside.* A father and son died when they used their *charcoal grill* to warm their tent while camping. *Carbon Monoxide* can be *deadly.* Another father and son died when they brought their *propane gas* stove inside their tent for warmth.
- About 30 people a year are injured from gas grill fires or explosions—beware of gas leaks.
- Campfires pose a danger to children when children are burned by direct contact or by exposure to flammable camping materials.

PLAYGROUND HAZARDS

- Over 200,000 children are treated at hospital emergency rooms each year with playground related injuries.
- 51,000 children annually are injured at home playgrounds.
- At least 147 children have died since 1990 from injuries relating to play ground equipment (about 70% occurred on home playgrounds).
- Children can sustain serious injuries when they fall off playground equipment onto inadequate ground surfacing.
- Pressure-treated (or CCA treated) wood, commonly found on playgrounds, poses a risk of cancer over a lifetime when children pick up arsenic residue on their hands.
- Lead paint has been found on public playgrounds and can result in lead poisoning.
- Drawstrings on children’s clothing have caught on slides and other playground equipment leading to deaths and near-strangulations.

MINI-HAMMOCK HAZARDS

- Mini-hammocks have caused at least 12 deaths to children from strangulation since 1984.
- Children have become entrapped in mini-hammocks that are sold without spreader bars.

TRAMPOLINES

- Two-thirds of injuries from trampoline use treated in hospitals are to children ages 6 to 14.
- Paralysis, neck injuries, and broken bones are injuries that can occur on backyard trampolines.
- Over 80,000 injuries result from trampoline use each year (including 6 deaths to children under 15 since 1990).

SOCCER GOALS

- Unanchored soccer goals have tipped over and crushed children (approximately 1200 people are injured annually).
- At least 34 soccer goal related deaths have occurred since 1979 (4 in the last 18 months alone).

WINDOWS

- Window Guards and other safety precautions can prevent needless fatalities. In 2002, 113 children under 14 died falling out of windows.
- Approximately 4,700 children ages 14 and under are treated each year at hospitals from window related casualties.

BLEACHERS

- The open sides and backs of bleachers pose a risk of severe injury from falling—especially to children.
- Approximately 3,350 children under the age of 15 were seen in U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2002 after falling from bleachers at schools.
- Between 1980 and 2003, 19 people died from injuries sustained after falling from bleachers.

AMUSEMENT PARK RIDES

- Amusement park accidents have caused deaths and other serious injuries. In June 2007, a 13 year-old girl had both of her feet severed on a ride at a well-known amusement park in Kentucky. In 2006, there were about 8,789 injuries to children ages 2 to 15 on amusement rides.
- Amusement rides are responsible for 4.4 fatalities annually.
 - In 2005, there were four deaths reported in New York alone.
 - Between 1987 and 2004, there were at least 67 fatalities.
- Roller coasters have ejected passengers and have caused whip-lash like injuries—one boy suffered a stroke after an artery was ripped in his neck.
- Injuries, including deaths, from popular inflatable rides have been increasing. In one instance, a 24 year old fell off an inflatable climbing wall and died. In another tragedy, a fifteen year old died falling off an inflatable obstacle course.



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