



www.toysafety.org watch@toysafety.org

Contact: **Alan Eisner (617) 320-3122, alanseisner@hotmail.com**
Speakers: **Joan E. Siff, President; James A. Swartz, Director**
Date/ Time: **Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 10:00 a.m.**
Location: Franciscan Children's, Chamberlain Conference Room, 30 Warren Street, Brighton, MA

W.A.T.C.H. Reveals Nominees for “10 Worst Toys” For 2016 Holiday Season
44th Annual Report Urges Parents: Beware of Unsafe Toys This Holiday Season

(Boston, MA—Nov. 15, 2016) World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.) today revealed its nominees for the **“10 Worst Toys of 2016”** and demonstrated the reasons why **“Flying Heroes Superman Launcher”** and other potentially hazardous toys should not be in the hands of children. Since January 2015, there have been at least nineteen (19) toys with recognized safety defects recalled in the United States. These recalls involved over eight hundred thousand (800,000) units of toys—five hundred thousand this year alone—and prove the inadequacy of existing standards.

Although parents have a right to expect that toys they give to their children are safe, unsafe toys remain an ongoing problem. Due to poor design, manufacturing and marketing practices, there are toys available for purchase today with the potential to lead to serious injury and even death. W.A.T.C.H. urges parents and caregivers to take precautions when buying toys—especially during the upcoming 2016 Holiday Season, which accounts **for more than 65% of all toy sales.**

This year’s toy report, announced by Consumer Advocates Joan E. Siff, President of W.A.T.C.H., and James A. Swartz, a nationally known trial attorney and Director of W.A.T.C.H., demonstrated the types of toy hazards available online and in retail stores so parents know what traps to avoid when buying toys. The conference highlighted toys with inconsistent and inadequate warnings, cautions and age recommendations as well as other classic safety hazards that continue to reappear year after year. Swartz and Siff also provided up-to-date information about toy recalls and stressed the necessity for more stringent oversight of the toy industry and vigilance by parents and caregivers during holiday shopping:

INCONSISTENT WARNINGS AND AGE RECOMMENDATIONS: Omissions and inconsistencies regarding important safety information can lead to misinformed, and potentially dangerous, consumer toy purchases. In some cases, the warnings on toys may not take into account how children play and may be impractical to follow in the real world. Other times, warnings may be omitted completely. One item on this year’s list, the “Kids Time Elephant”, a plush pillow in the form of a cuddly stuffed animal, is sold without warnings regarding potential suffocation hazards for babies. Parents may not be aware of the serious risks associated with pillows used by infants. Similar items have been banned. Other toys on the list are either sold with different age recommendations depending on the package bought or fail to warn of potential hazards altogether. Whether buying toys online or at a retail store, parents should thoroughly inspect a toy and its packaging prior to putting it into the hands of a child.

FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE — SAFE DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE: The best weapon in the fight to prevent injuries to children continues to be safely designed and manufactured products. While recalls are an important safety measure, they are only a band-aid for the larger issue: dangerous toys shouldn't reach the hands of consumers in the first place. **Recalls are reactive, not proactive.** Unfortunately, many consumers never receive notice of toy recalls and may not know that a dangerous toy sits like a time bomb in their child's toy box. Many of the toys recalled in the last year not only put children at risk of serious injury or death, but also are evidence of substandard manufacturing practices and inadequate premarket testing. Moreover, some toys that are in compliance with current industry or regulatory standards have proven to be hazardous, demonstrating the inadequacy of existing standards. The burden must be on manufacturers and retailers, not consumers, to identify the known hazards before their products enter the channels of commerce. Toys are embellishments of life, not necessities, and there is no excuse for manufacturing, importing and distributing a toy that can kill a child.

SAFETY TRAPS AND TIPS — WHAT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS CAN DO: The key message today is to let caregivers know that while there are dangerous toys being sold in retail stores and online, awareness this holiday season and year-round can truly save lives. Caregivers should not be lulled into a false sense of security that a toy is safe because of a familiar brand name on a package or due to its availability at a well-known retailer. Consumers can inspect new toys as well as toys already in homes and schools for dangerous hazards and stay away from any toys that may have been recalled, caused injuries, or are defective. Awareness of classic hidden toy hazards can prevent injuries. Shockingly, classic toy dangers, such as small parts, strings, projectiles, toxic substances, rigid materials, and inaccurate warnings and labels, resurface each year in newly designed toys

TOY SAFETY — SERIOUS BUSINESS: For over four decades, W.A.T.C.H. has discussed the issue of dangerous toys in the hope of bringing about change and reducing injuries to children. Nonetheless, there remains an alarming number of dangerous toys on store shelves, in catalogues, and on e-retailers' websites. In a toy industry generating approximately \$22 billion dollars in sales a year in the United States alone, safety concerns must be a priority, not an afterthought. **One child is treated in a U.S. emergency room every three minutes for a toy-related injury.** From 1990 to 2011, there was a 40% increase in toy-related injuries. In 2014, there were over 251,000 toy-related injuries and 61 children died in toy-related incidents between 2010 and 2014. Although even one injury to one child is too many, particularly when the injury is preventable, recent statistics emphasize that dangerous toys continue to pose a year-round threat. The recurrence of many known hazards in toys in the past year is clearly suggestive of a broken system that needs fixing before more children are harmed.

W.A.T.C.H.'s 2016 "10 WORST TOYS" LIST: Consumers can help children enjoy a safer holiday season knowing what traps to avoid when selecting toys. W.A.T.C.H.'s "10 Worst Toys" list, a hands-on tool for consumers, raises awareness of the different types of potential hazards to avoid while toy shopping. **The particular toys on the "10 Worst Toys" list are illustrative of some hazards in toys being sold to consumers, and should not be considered as the only potentially hazardous toys on the market.**

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: **Joan E. Siff**, President of W.A.T.C.H., began presenting the "Ten Worst Toys" list with Attorney Edward M. Swartz (1934-2010) on behalf of W.A.T.C.H. in 1991. She earned her J.D. and Masters in Mass Communication from Boston University. After serving as an Assistant District Attorney in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Norfolk County, Ms. Siff practiced product liability litigation. Ms. Siff is admitted to the bars in Massachusetts, New York and the District of Columbia. Ms. Siff is the author of "Toy Regulation Still Lagging in Protecting Children," published in the Leader's Product Liability, Law and Strategy. She has given numerous lectures on behalf of W.A.T.C.H. to increase awareness about unsafe children's products. Joan Siff has appeared on Fox and Friends, Fox News Live, LawLive (FATV), CNN Radio Atlanta, NECN, The Michael Smerconish Morning Drive Radio Program (Philadelphia). Having served on several non-profit boards relating to children's causes, she is currently a Board Member of Franciscan Children's. **James A. Swartz** is a nationally known trial attorney, consumer advocate, and a Director of W.A.T.C.H. His law practice at Swartz & Swartz includes many well-known cases involving product liability injuries. Attorney Swartz has authored book chapters relating to child and product safety, including "Hazardous Playthings Causing Injury to Children," Children and Injuries (Lawyers & Judges Pub. Co., Inc.); and "The Common Law in the New Millennium- Protecting Our Children," Civil Trial Practice-Winning Techniques of Successful Trial Attorneys, (Lawyers & Judges Pub. Co., Inc.), as well as numerous articles. Mr. Swartz earned his J.D. at Georgetown University Law Center. He is a member of Trial Lawyers for Public Justice, serving as Massachusetts State Coordinator; The Massachusetts Bar Association; The Massachusetts Academy of Trial Attorneys; The American Bar Association; and The Boston Bar Association, among many other associations. James Swartz has appeared on such national television programs including as "Take It Personally" on CNN, "Newsfront" on MSNBC, "Legal Cafe" on COURT TV, "Crook and Chase" on the Nashville Network (TNN), interview on BLOOMBERG BUSINESS NEWS television network, and in news reports on CNN, and other national news networks.

PEPPA PIG'S MUDDY PUDDLES FAMILY



Price:	\$11.99
Manufacturer or Distributor:	Jazwares, LLC
Retailer(s):	Target, Amazon.com
Age Recommendation:	"2+ or 3+" (depending on which packaging purchased)
Warnings:	"WARNING! CHOKING HAZARD-small parts. Not for children under 3 years" (on some packages for sale, not on others)

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR CHOKING INJURIES!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! This set of four "Peppa Pig" figurines includes an entire "muddy puddles family". Incredibly, despite the "choking hazard" warning and "3+" age recommendation on the packaging of some toys, other packages of what appear to be the same toys are sold for oral-age children as young as "2+" with no warnings about toy-related hazards.

KIDS TIME BABY CHILDREN'S ELEPHANT PILLOW



Price:	\$19.99
Manufacturer or Distributor:	Kids Time US; Appear Toys
Retailer(s):	Amazon.com
Age Recommendation:	"Age range: >3 years old, Grown-ups" (<i>retailer website only</i>)
Warnings:	None. Product description on retailer website states in part: "When this elephant pillow [is] for use with infant, it should be under adult supervision"

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR SUFFOCATION!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! This large, plush pillow in the form of a cuddly stuffed elephant is marketed with an image on the retailer's website depicting an infant snuggling alone with the plush animal. There are no warnings or age recommendations on the product itself. The hazards associated with pillows sold for infants are well documented. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has warned that a pillow can block a baby's mouth and can cause a baby to suffocate. "Infant pillow[s]" and "any other similar article[s]" which are "intended or promoted for use by children under one year of age" have been banned by the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (16 CFR 1500.18).

SLIMEBALL SLINGER



Price:	\$24.99
Manufacturer or Distributor:	Diggin Active, Inc
Retailer(s):	Toys R Us, Amazon.com
Age Recommendation:	"6+"
Warnings:	"WARNING! Never shoot at any person or animal..." and other warnings, cautions and instructions on package

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR EYE INJURIES!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! The “slimeball launcher” is similar to a slingshot, and is sold with bright green “slimeballs” as ammunition, which can be fired “over 30 feet!” Projectiles launched with such force have the potential to cause serious eye injuries.

BANZAI BUMP N' BOUNCE BODY BUMPERS



Price:	\$14.88
Manufacturer or Distributor:	ToyQuest
Retailer(s):	Walmart, Amazon.com, Ebay.com, Sears.com
Age Recommendation:	"4-12"
Warnings:	"WARNING! To avoid risk of serious injury or death: ...This product does not provide protection. Impact hazard may present; protective equipment (for head, elbows, knees, hands, etc) should be worn (not included)," and other warnings/cautious on package insert, packaging and product

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT INJURIES!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! Children as young as 4-years-old are encouraged to “[s]lip into your bumper suit for a “bumpin’ bump ‘em’ fun time!” Children on the packaging are shown running into each other without any “protection” (not included), as recommended by the manufacturer.



Price: \$34.48
Manufacturer or Distributor: Hasbro
Retailer(s): Walmart.com, Target.com, Amazon.com, Kmart.com
Age Recommendation: "AGES 14+"
Warnings: NONE

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR EYE INJURIES!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! The manufacturer of this "blaster" with an "easy-load magazine" encourages "precision battling" during "intense head-to-head competition." The ammunition provided can shoot with enough force to potentially cause eye injuries. Images on the box depict children wearing masks covering their face and eyes, however the face mask is "not included" and must be purchased separately.



Price:	\$26.00
Manufacturer or Distributor:	Tomy
Retailer(s):	Amazon.com, Walmart.com, ToyRUs.com
Age Recommendation:	"3+"
Warnings:	"WARNING: CHOKING HAZARD –Small parts... Not for children under 3 years" (packaging)

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR PUNCTURE WOUND INJURIES!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! This “rugged Tyrannosaurus Rex” is a popular children’s movie character marketed as a “Rustler’s worst nightmare.” Operation of the dinosaur by children as young as 3-years-old in order to evoke “galloping action and sounds” requires the push of a button on the toy’s rigid, pointed tail, which may be held close to a child’s torso or face. There exists a potential for significant puncture wound injuries during encouraged playtime activity.



Price: \$19.99
Manufacturer or Distributor: TPF Toys, Ltd.
Retailer(s): Toys R Us
Age Recommendation: "2+"
Warnings: None (instructions on packaging: "Adult supervision Required")

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR STRANGULATION INJURIES!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! Despite the industry's standard requiring strings on playpen and crib toys to be less than 12 inches in length, manufacturers are permitted to market pull toys like the "Peppy Pup," with a cord measuring approximately 31 inches.

FLYING HEROES SUPERMAN LAUNCHER



Price:	\$16.99
Manufacturer or Distributor:	I-Star Entertainment, LLC; The Bridge Direct, Inc.
Retailer(s):	Toys R Us, Amazon.com, Walmart.com, Sears.com, Ebay.com, BigW.com
Age Recommendation:	"4+"
Warnings:	"Warning! Never aim at eyes or face" (packaging), and other "safety instructions" and warnings on packaging and insert

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR EYE AND FACIAL INJURIES!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! This flying, winged superhero figurine is sold with a launcher for children as young as 4 years old, who are encouraged to “[g]rip it!” and “[r]ip it!” The instructions caution that the Superman character should only be launched “at arm’s length and pointing up and away from your face....”

BABY MAGIC FEED AND PLAY BABY



Price: \$19.99

Manufacturer or Distributor: New Adventures LLC LTD

Retailer(s): Toys R Us, Amazon.com, Sears.com

Age Recommendation: "2+"

Warnings: None

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR INGESTION INJURIES!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! The "Baby Magic" doll, which plays "peek a boo," comes with a baby bottle, high chair, blanket, food dish, and "interactive spoon." The slender, rigid plastic spoon is approximately 2 3/4" long, with the potential to be mouthed and occlude a child's airway.



Price:	\$9.99
Manufacturer or Distributor:	Jakks Pacific, Inc.
Retailer(s):	Toys R Us, Amazon.com
Age Recommendation:	"6+"
Warnings:	"Warning. Not suitable for children under 36 months. Small parts. Choking hazard" (packaging)

HAZARD: POTENTIAL FOR BLUNT IMPACT INJURIES!

W.A.T.C.H. OUT! 6-year-old children are encouraged to “[f]eel the power of the horde!” with the “legendary Doomhammer,” based on weaponry in the “Warcraft” movie. The manufacturer offers no warnings regarding potential impact injuries associated with foreseeable use of the heavy, rigid plastic battle hammer.