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W.A.T.C.H.'s Annual 2019 Summer Safety Report **For Parents and Caregivers**

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH
W.A.T.C.H. LAUNCHES ITS #SHOUTsafety Campaign
AND KICKS OFF THE SUMMER
WITH IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KEEP KIDS SAFE

TRAMPOLINE PARKS, HIDDEN WATER TRAPS AND BACKYARD ACTIVITIES
TOP W.A.T.C.H.'S LIST OF 10 POTENTIAL SAFETY CONCERNS THIS SUMMER

(Boston, MA- June 18, 2019) World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.) kicks off the summer with important safety **information** for parents and caregivers to help keep kids safe during the warm weather months and year round. In honor of National Safety Month, today W.A.T.C.H. launches its **#SHOUTsafety** campaign emphasizing the importance of sharing safety information to help reduce preventable injuries.

At a press conference at Franciscan Children's in Boston, Consumer Advocates Joan E. Siff, President of W.A.T.C.H., and James A. Swartz, Director of W.A.T.C.H., showcased **10 Top "Summer Safety Traps"** as representative of some of the many different types of hazards parents and caregivers can avoid to safeguard children throughout the summer season (**SEE ATTACHED LIST**).

Siff and Swartz said that while the combination of warm weather and school vacation is an opportunity for children to enjoy the outdoors, it can also be a time for injuries. **Traumatic injuries to children can double in summer months as July and August account for more preventable, accidental deaths than any other two-month period.**¹ W.A.T.C.H. believes that greater awareness of popular family activities, some with a track record of injuries and deaths, could save lives and reduce injuries.

W.A.T.C.H.'s #SHOUTsafety Campaign:

W.A.T.C.H.'s **#SHOUTsafety** campaign is a **call to action** encouraging families, caregivers and consumers to raise the volume when it comes to talking about safety issues. Through this

campaign and other year-round efforts, W.A.T.C.H. strives to encourage safer manufacture, design and marketing of products before they enter the channels of commerce and to promote increased transparency and reporting by manufacturers when safety issues arise. Recalls are important safety measures, but occur after the product is in the hands of unsuspecting children who may suffer serious, even life-threatening injuries. For example, the recent Consumer Product Safety Commission recall of the Fisher Price Rock 'N Play highlights the importance of making sure products are safe **before** reaching retail outlets. The recall was issued only after a reported 30 infants died since 2009ⁱⁱ. Immediate action is needed when the risk of child injury or death is known, so that more children are not unnecessarily put at risk. Increased dissemination of timely and detailed information about safety issues allows more consumers to make informed decisions when choosing children's products and activities. Sounding the alarm for safety is even more critical when one considers that some unsafe or recalled toys may resurface in yard sales or second-hand online sites. Also, new "re-designed" or re-packaged products may have safety traps similar to their predecessors. This summer, stay informed, know what to look for, and **#SHOUTsafety** with your family and community to reduce preventable injuries.

Trampoline Parks:

Trampoline theme parks, now a billion-dollar industry, have been associated with potentially catastrophic injuries including fractures, cervical spine trauma and paralysis. For many years, W.A.T.C.H. has warned families about the devastating injuries associated with backyard trampolines. With the popularity of trampoline-themed parks on the rise, recreational trampolines are accessible to an even wider audience. Trampoline theme parks are expanding rapidly from an estimated 40 parks in 2011 to more than 800.ⁱⁱⁱ In the last seven years, a reported 6 people died at trampoline parks.^{iv} The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports injuries at trampoline parks have skyrocketed between 2013 and 2017 from 2,500 to nearly 18,000 injuries. Parents and caregivers need to be informed of the potentially serious consequences associated with the recreational use of trampolines.

WATER SAFETY: Inflatable Pool Rings, Pool Covers, Broken Drain Covers, Shallow water

Water safety is another vitally important issue, particularly in the warm weather as families look to cool down with backyard water activities. Between the spring and summer months of May through August, almost two thirds of fatal drownings to children younger than 18 years occur.^v The number of children that drown in backyard pools each summer highlights the importance of raising awareness about water safety. In 2016, a reported 289 children under 5 years old drowned in pools and spas. Each year from 2016 to 2018, an estimated 6,600 children under 15 years old were seen in hospitals for submersion related injuries.^{vi}

W.A.T.C.H. is alerting parents to be vigilant when kids are in the water. "One of our goals today is to be proactive and raise awareness about water safety including those hazards that may not

be widely known such as **water rings** that can flip over trapping a child's head under water, **pool covers** that collect rain water, or **pool drain covers** that are broken, outdated or defective," said Siff and Swartz. Recently, a 3-year-old girl was caught on film when she jumped into a pool wearing a water ring, flipped upside down, and was trapped headfirst in the water. Fortunately, she was rescued by her sister prior to being admitted to the hospital for two weeks.vii Another hazard can arise from powerful suction and circulation associated with missing or defective pool and spa drain covers. Serious injuries to children and adults have been reported, including hair and limb entrapment. Confirm that the pools your children swim in have the appropriate pool drain covers and are well-maintained. It takes just moments for an accident to happen. Checking water safety measures at home and at community pools is an important way to kick-off the summer.

Backyard Play:

Parents look forward to their children having fun in the sun with friends, at birthday parties, or barbecues. However, knowing some of the potential hazards that may accompany certain outdoor activities can save lives and prevent injuries. "Do not be lulled into a false sense of security that a toy or activity is safe simply because it is popular," said Siff. Adults and teens have been warned not to use the popular **Lawn Slip and Slides** due to the risk of life-threatening injuries, including paralyzes, that have resulted. **Water balloon slingshots** remain popular but pose the potential dual threat of blunt force trauma to eyes and choking hazards for young children.

Other Safety Concerns:

Other safety hazards highlighted in this year's safety report include **non-motorized scooters**, which remain responsible for the most toy-related injuries, **All Terrain Vehicles**, and **toys with small parts** that continue unnecessarily to put young children at risk. Recently a toy doll with a removable headband that could be a potential choking hazard for a young child was purchased. Swartz cautioned, "Unfortunately, we see some of the same potential hazards, hazards that should be well known to the industry, reappear year after year."

Online Shopping:

Sometimes finding product warnings and cautions online can feel like a treasure hunt, only the stakes are higher. W.A.T.C.H. wants to remind the many shoppers who order online to thoroughly inspect a toy and its packaging for warning signs of obvious hazards after the toy is delivered and before giving it to a child. Ordering online, shoppers face the disadvantage of not being able to physically examine the toy at the time of purchase. Some online product descriptions may omit warnings and cautions or provide incomplete or misleading information.

Parents and Caregivers need to remain vigilant:

Siff and Swartz noted that every year there are often millions of units of toys recalled after they have been available for sale. In April and May alone, there have been at least 9 recalls of children’s products, representing over 5,900,000 units of unsafe products polluting the market in the U.S. and Canada. Last week, Target recalled toddler rain boots because the unicorn horn on the rain boots could detach, posing a choking hazard to young children.^{viii} The difficulty in purging the market of goods that have been recalled shows that, while recalls are necessary, they are not a cure-all. Recent recalls of toys and other children’s products are a further reminder that not all children’s products are safe and, particularly when children’s safety is at stake, we need to remain cautious. Siff and Swartz advised parents to remember to regularly examine the toys in their child’s toy box.

Continued injuries and deaths to children from popular warm-weather backyard activities, drowning, toys with small parts and other hazards reveal the urgent need for increased awareness, safer products, better pre-market testing, and a more responsible market to help prevent injuries. In the meantime, parents can avoid many hazards relating to toys and recreational activities by remaining vigilant, knowing the facts, identifying safety red flags and sharing the **#SHOUTsafety** message.

i <https://www.nsc.org/in-the-newsroom/when-it-comes-to-accidental-deaths-united-states-is-approaching-deadliest-stretch-of-the-year>

ii <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls/2019/Fisher-Price-Recalls-Rock-n-Play-Sleepers-Due-to-Reports-of-Deaths>

iii <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trampoline-park-dangers-lawmakers-call-for-action-senator-richard-blumenthal/>

iv <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trampoline-parks-rising-in-popularity-expert-warns-of-catastrophic-injuries/>

v <https://www.ncfrp.org/wp-content/uploads/NCRPCD-Docs/Keeping-Kids-Safe-in-and-Around-Water-Report-2016.pdf>

^{vi} Pool and Spa Submersion: Estimated Nonfatal Drowning Injuries and Reported Drownings, 2019 Report (CPSC, May 2019)

vii <https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2019/06/03/girl-saves-sister-from-drowning-mxp-vpx.hln/video/playlists/atv-trending-videos/>

viii <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls/2019/Target-Recalls-Toddler-Boots-Due-to-Choking-Hazard-19-135>