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Toxic Toys and Faulty Cribs: 2008 sees record number of crib recalls, millions of toxic toys and too many recalled products still in use

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(CHICAGO) 2007 might have been the Year of the Recall, leading to landmark children's product safety legislation in Congress, but the recalls continued through 2008, including a record number of crib recalls.

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Kids In Danger, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety, released *Toxic Toys and Faulty Cribs: An examination of children's product recalls in 2008, recall effectiveness at CPSC and the implications for child safety* today with U.S.

Nancy A. Cowles
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Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky and Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan. In addition, KID was joined by Emily Miller of Illinois PIRG and Anita Weinberg of Lead Safe Illinois.

The report found that children's product recalls by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) remained high in 2008, following 2007's record numbers. There were 190 recalls accounting for more than 18 million items, including twelve recalls of cribs responsible for five deaths.

"These products together caused at least 210 injuries and 7 deaths," stated Nancy Cowles, executive director of Kids In Danger. "And those incidents include only those already reported at the time of the recall. More needs to be done to protect children from these hazards.

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DON'T LEARN ABOUT RECALLS FROM YOUR BABY

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Additional findings of the report include:

- Toys were the largest category of recalled children's products – 41%
- Despite the scrutiny on lead in 2007, 36% of the recalls were for lead paint hazards.
- There were five recalls of over one million products with over 18 million units recalled in total.
- Two-thirds of the recalled products were made in China, 4% were made here in the United States.
- Evenflo had the most injuries prior to a recall – 94 in their Majestic High Chair.
- A record number, 12, cribs were recalled, involving eight injuries and five deaths.
- While CPSC requires monthly updates on Corrective Action Plans, research showed that many companies simply don't file the report or don't fill in the requested information. For those that do, the numbers show that most recalled products remain in the hands of consumers.

KID recommends that CPSC immediately begin to plan and implement a public database with product and injury data. In addition, CPSC should require more of companies when a product is recalled to ensure dangerous products are removed from use or repaired.

“Congress should request annual reports on recall effectiveness,” stated Cowles. “Perhaps the light of day will encourage companies to take those extra steps to get their defective products out of homes and child care facilities.”

“We are obligated to protect our children from the dangers of the world when the solutions are as obvious as they are with toxic toys,” said Rep. Jan Schakowsky. “By increasing oversight and enforcing accountability on manufacturers we will provide parents with greater peace of mind and children with toys they can enjoy.”

Toxic Toys and Faulty Cribs, Add 2

“I have launched many investigations to identify and remove dangerous products from store shelves in Illinois. The results of these investigations underscore the report’s findings that the Consumer Product Safety Commission must do more to make the recall process work effectively for families,” Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan said. “We have learned that it is not enough just to post a recall on a Web site and distribute a press release. The CPSC and product manufacturers must implement more proactive and aggressive measures to ensure that consumers with dangerous products in their homes become aware of the recall and understand how to respond appropriately.”

KID recommends that parents check the products used with their children at www.cpsc.gov and sign up for safety updates at www.KidsinDanger.org. In addition, parents should report problems with a product both to the manufacturer and CPSC and urge Congress to continue its oversight of the agency.

“Parents should not have to be scientists in the toy store in order to make sure they are buying safe products for their children,” said Emily Miller, Health Care Advocate with Illinois PIRG. “Toys should be safe, period. Kids, who are our littlest consumers, deserve high safety standards that protect them from death and other serious health hazards.”

“Lead in toys is one of the causes of children being harmed by lead,” concluded Anita Weinberg of Lead Safe Illinois. “At the same time, lead poisoning is one of the few causes of social and learning problems we know how to solve - it's preventable. Kids in Dangers' report on "Toxic Toys and Faulty Cribs" goes a long way to helping raise awareness about preventable risks to children.”

More information about Kids In Danger and dangerous juvenile products is available at (312) 595-0649 or www.KidsInDanger.org.

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