



10 Years of Dedication 1998-2008

Protecting Children by Improving Children's Product Safety

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The Year of the Recall: Children's product recalls double; injuries from recalled products up 374%

(CHICAGO) Media reports, millions of lead-tainted toys and Congressional hearings have thrust children's product safety into the spotlight. But headlines don't tell the whole story. Recalled products in 2007 included infant carriers which dumped their occupants resulting in 160 injuries; a recall of deadly cribs left consumers without a repair for at least a month, and millions of dangerous products that may remain in homes and child care because of inadequate efforts to reach consumers.

Kids In Danger, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety, released with U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, *2007: The Year of the Recall*, an annual study of recalled children's products. In addition to Schakowsky, KID was joined by Cara Smith of the Illinois Attorney General's office, Brian Imus 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) jumped in 2007. There were 231 recalls accounting for more than 46 million items, including twelve recalls that involved one million or more units.

"These products together caused at least 657 injuries and 6 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

Additional findings of the report include:

- Toys constituted almost half of recalled children's product recalls with over 30 million units. The two largest recalls were for toys – 7.3 million Polly Pocket dolls containing small magnetic parts and 4.2 million Aqua Dots beading sets which contained a chemical that could induce comas if swallowed.
- Thirty-eight manufacturers recalled more than one product in 2006. Mattel led the list with seven under its Fisher-Price brand and six under the Mattel brand.
- When manufacturers and regulators went looking for lead in children's products – they found it. Just under half, 49%, of the recalls involved a lead hazard.
- Evenflo's Embrace Infant Car Seat/Carrier had 679 reports of failure and 160 injuries before it was pulled from the market for a faulty handle that dumped its occupants. There were over 1,500 reports of failures with Magnetix building sets before they were pulled from the market for the second time in two years.
- Over half (53%) of the sporting goods and almost half (48%) of the nursery products recalled caused injury before they were pulled from the market.

KID recommends:

- Congress must act quickly to enact pending legislation that would increase funding for CPSC and strengthen their ability to protect children.
- States should enact legislation to ban the sale of recalled products or their use in childcare facilities. Only eight states, including Illinois, now have a Children's Product Safety Act.
- Lead should be banned in any children's products. Manufacturers must certify that their products and product components are lead-free. KID supports the American Academy of Pediatrics call for lead levels of no more than 40 parts per million, as compared to the currently allowable rate of 600 parts per million.

“The report released by Kids in Danger today underscores the need to overhaul our nation's consumer protection system,” said U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-

IL). “Under the current system, too many dangerous products are slipping through the cracks and making their way into our homes. Fortunately, the 110th Congress has made a serious commitment to eliminate dangerous products, modernize product safety standards and improve the effectiveness of recalls. The CPSC reauthorization bill, which recently passed the House, would save lives by getting dangerous products off store shelves and out of our homes. I urge my colleagues in the U.S. Senate to pass the strongest CPSC reauthorization bill possible.”

“In Illinois, by partnering with advocacy groups like Kids in Danger, we have taken the protection of children into our own hands and are working to inform caregivers of these dangers, said Attorney General Madigan. “The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and product manufacturers must take greater steps to ensure that consumers who have these dangerous products in their homes become aware of recall and know how to respond and that retailers have sufficient information to inform their customers.”

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 the CPSC and urge elected representatives to push for better regulation of children’s products.

“The release of today’s report highlights that the agency we rely on to protect our children from unsafe products is failing to do its job,” said Brian Imus, State Director with the consumer advocacy group Illinois PIRG. “We need to stop hazardous toys from ending up on store shelves, rather than rely on woefully ineffective, after-the-fact recalls to remove them from our homes.”

"There is no acceptable reason for lead to be used in children's toys and products," says Anita Weinberg, Chair, Lead Safe Illinois, housed at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. "A parent should not have to worry that instead of stimulating their child, a toy manufactured with lead is potentially limiting the child's ability to learn."

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

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