



# ACTION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2004

## Kids In Danger (KID)

is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety. KID was founded in 1998 by Linda Ginzler and Boaz Keysar, the parents of sixteen-month-old Danny Keysar who died in his Chicago childcare home when a portable crib collapsed around his neck.



## KID's Mission

is to **promote** the development of safer children's products, **advocate** for children, and **educate** the public, especially parents and caregivers, about dangerous children's products.

**Look inside to learn more about lead in recalled children's products and updates on KID's programs.**



## Safer children's products, aware parents, and engaged policymakers: KID's blueprint for a safer future.

Growing from a heartfelt email message sent from the basement of Danny's grieving parents' home to an organization with multiple programs and outreach efforts, KID is rededicating itself to our mission to improve children's product safety as we start our seventh year. See the progress we have made.

- Seven states, - Illinois, Michigan, Rhode Island, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Vermont - have now passed the **Children's Product Safety Act**, banning the sale or lease of dangerous children's products or the use of these products in licensed childcare. Other states, including Wisconsin, Washington and New York have increased their efforts to protect their children from recalled and dangerous children's products.
- Voluntary standards for many children's products are stronger now through the efforts of consumer advocates, including Kids In Danger and the Danny Foundation, on the ASTM International subcommittees on juvenile products.
- On a recent day, following the release of *Playing with Poison: Lead Poisoning Hazards of Children's Product Recalls*, [www.KidsInDanger.org](http://www.KidsInDanger.org) received over 750 visitors. Read more about this groundbreaking report inside, including how to protect your child from lead in children's products.
- Through our TEST Program and outreach programs, engineering professors and students, health care providers and early childhood educators are all receiving information they can use to improve children's product safety. Read about the development of these exciting programs inside.

But our efforts must continue and for that, we need your continued support.

- Contrary to what most parents believe, there is no requirement in this country that children's products be tested for safety before they are sold. Alerting caregivers to recalled products is not enough. More must be done to stop dangerous products from reaching our store shelves. Our goal is that every manufacturer puts only products that have passed the most stringent safety standards on the store shelves and that regulators redouble their efforts to protect children from unsafe products.
- Too many childcare providers, parents and other caregivers are still unaware of the dangers of recalled or unsafe children's products. More must be done to make every new parent, every childcare provider, and every health care provider aware of the steps they can take to keep children safe from dangerous products.

KID has the programs in place to work toward these goals. Now, we need to stretch our efforts to reach them. Please read about our programs inside and sign up today by mail or email to participate fully in KID's important work.



# Spotlight

Minutes after being born, Amelia Brummel used her big brown eyes to connect with everyone in the delivery room. In April of 1997, those same brown eyes struck terror in her mother's heart when she turned to see eight-month old Amelia submerged under water, unable to cry for help. In only a split second, as Amelia's mother turned her back to throw away a piece of lint, Amelia's bath seat had flipped over, trapping her under water.

According to the CPSC, from 1983 to 2003, 104 children have drowned in incidents associated with bath seats and 162 have incurred non-fatal injuries. Although a traumatic experience, Amelia's recovery was quick and without long-term effects.



Amelia Brummel as a baby

Seven years later, the sparkles in Amelia's eyes have become stars. Amelia's fanbase extends far beyond her family, encompassing animals and friends of all ages. Currently, this talented little girl takes dance, voice and drama lessons- not only entertaining her family and friends with the many verses of "On Top of Spaghetti" but performing in local musical theatre productions as well. Amelia clearly has become an extraordinary child, bringing sunshine to everyone around her.

A Safety 1st Bath Seat almost stole this precious life away.

Although its brand name might imply differently, bath seats are for convenience only, not safety. Bath seats offer a false sense of security. Parents are more inclined to leave their infant unattended, even if only for a moment, if their child is in a bath seat. Amelia had been using the bath seat for two months prior to her near drowning; yet in a single instant, the product malfunctioned nearly killing her. Current bath seat designs cannot be made safe. Suction cups do not always stick; and if they do, they can keep the child submerged if he or she slips through the leg openings.

Recently, the CPSC drafted mandatory safety standards for baby bath seats including a stability test to prevent tip-over, a test to prevent a child from slipping through the leg openings and becoming entrapped; and a new warning label. KID believes the product should be banned - making it 'safer' increases the risk a child will be left alone. A decision to implement the new standard is pending.

Although still haunted by nightmares of her daughter's near drowning, Amelia's mother has enjoyed watching her grow and experience life, "I have discovered how wonderful it is to watch your child develop a real passion for something that grows deep inside her and brings joy to her and everyone she touches... I can't even begin to contemplate what life would be like without our daughter."

Dangerous children's products not only rob children of their lives, they steal the joy children bring to everyone around them. KID works hard to prevent unnecessary deaths from unsafe children's products. Amelia's story, like Danny's, reminds KID why we're here and why we won't stop until children are safe.

# KID Program Updates

## PLAYING WITH POISON

Since 1990, 49\* children's products have been recalled because of lead hazards. This danger prompted the report *Playing with Poison: Lead Poisoning Hazards of Children's Product Recalls 1990-2004*. KID released the report in Chicago on August 25, 2004 with Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan and representatives of safety and children's organizations.

*Playing With Poison* found that lead paint still coats everything from snaps on an infant's romper to Radio Flyer wagons. Lead has been found in crayons, sidewalk chalk, and vending machine jewelry at levels 550 times what is considered toxic in paint.

"Lead has been identified as a hazardous substance for over 100 years and yet is used again and again in products for its most vulnerable victims," stated Nancy Cowles, KID executive director. "This counteracts the idea that no child's developmental potential should be jeopardized for playing with a toy." Lead is especially hazardous to children ages six and younger, causing neurological damage, attention disorders, and other adverse health effects. Despite the known hazards and the 1978 ban of lead paint, over 156 million units of children's products have been recalled due to the presence of lead since 1990.



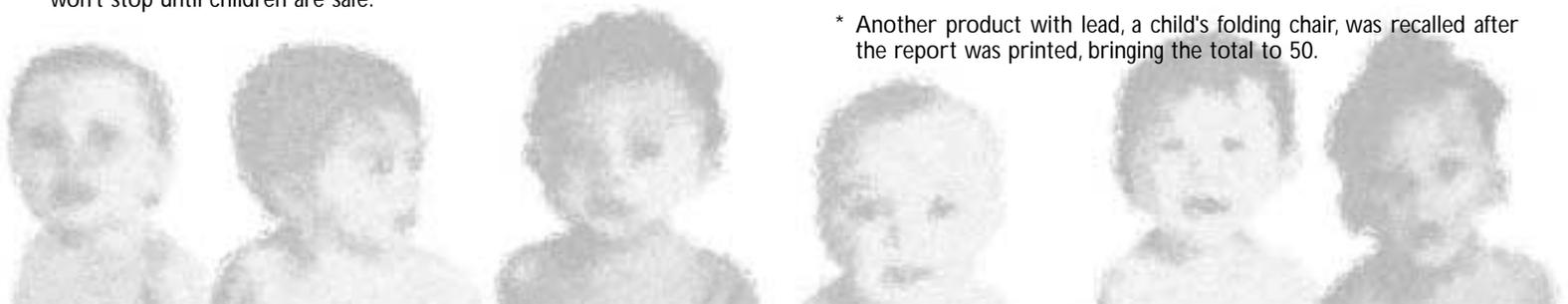
Attorney General Lisa Madigan and representatives of safety and children's organizations at the news conference in August.

Some recommendations cited from the report:

- The government should set a maximum allowable level of lead for children's products and require manufacturers to certify that each batch of paint they use is lead free prior to importing or selling the product.
- Healthcare providers should consider children products as a possible source of lead poisoning and discuss the issue with parents. All children age 6 months to 6 years should be tested annually for lead.
- Mandatory pre-market testing is needed to keep poisonous children's products off the market.

The full report and a fact sheet for parents is available for download at [www.KidsInDanger.org](http://www.KidsInDanger.org), or call (312) 595-0649 to receive a copy. Consumers can review recalls and sign up to receive email notice of future recalls, including those involving lead, at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or sign up for monthly email alerts on children's product safety at [www.KidsInDanger.org](http://www.KidsInDanger.org).

\* Another product with lead, a child's folding chair, was recalled after the report was printed, bringing the total to 50.



## TEACH EARLY SAFETY TESTING (TEST)

TEST was launched by KID in 2003 and is designed to promote the development of safe products by integrating children's product safety, standards, and testing practices into the engineering curriculum.



TEST has seen much progress. To date KID has performed a survey to evaluate current safety education in engineering programs, begun the formation of an advisory committee, and drafted a lecture to be used in freshman engineering seminars.

The survey findings, given to mechanical engineering students at the University of Michigan, illustrates the need to improve and expand the design safety information reaching future product designers. The students displayed understanding of the importance of standards in making safe products, but don't have enough information to integrate safety into their designs.

Watch for the announcement of the advisory committee in the fall. The committee will guide KID as we refine our materials for a safety-based engineering module and work to integrate it into the undergraduate engineering curriculum at several pilot institutions.

The introductory lecture, suitable for freshman seminars has been drafted and distributed. This lecture, along with a curriculum guide will serve as the foundation for the engineering module. The lecture introduces the concepts of safety, ethics and standards.

Thanks to a generous \$25,000 grant from Underwriters Laboratories Inc., KID expects to see real progress on this project this year. Up next will be finalizing the program's pilot sites, as well as continued expansion and refining of our materials for the engineering module.

## SAFE FROM THE START

Welcome *Safe From The Start*, KID's newest and most comprehensive public health campaign! Designed to directly educate parents, caregivers, and healthcare providers, *Safe From The Start* aims to save young lives by integrating child product safety information into pediatrician waiting and exam rooms, parenting skills and prenatal health classes, and Head Start and childcare programs.



*Safe From The Start* is a large-scale grassroots outreach campaign born from *Health Care Providers Outreach Program (HCPOP)* and *Test it Now! (TIN)*, two previous KID education awareness projects.

Though still in its young stages, *Safe From The Start* has already established over thirty partnerships including the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago, Healthy Child Care Illinois, the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and local YMCAs and health clubs.

*Safe From The Start* aims to save young lives and prevent unnecessary tragedies. Its goals are the 4Es:

- **Educate** healthcare providers and childbirth, parenting, and safety instructors to ensure they are reliable sources on child product safety.
- **Expand** KID outreach efforts to include community organizations, parenting and prenatal classes, YMCAs, and Head Start programs.
- **Empower** families to make more informed decisions concerning their children's safety.
- **Eliminate** child injuries and deaths by increasing awareness and disseminating emergency and safety resources.

*Safe From The Start* materials are now available from KID in English and Spanish. Additional materials will be produced in 2005. So, get involved, educate yourself, and help us keep kids *Safe from the Start!*

## Best Friend Award Night 2004

Holding true to its reputation, KID's fourth annual Best Friend Award Night was a great success! This year's event, held May 26, 2004, honored Mary Ellen Fise and Rachel Weintraub as KID's 2004 Best Friends. As former and current product safety experts at the Consumer Federation of America, Mary Ellen and Rachel have shown a true commitment to our nation's children. The event, held at the elegant Blackbird restaurant, raised over \$22,000 to directly support KID's programs and mission. Kids In Danger would like to sincerely thank the Blackbird for their generosity in hosting the event, in addition to all those who contributed to the success of this remarkable night.



Mary Ellen Fise (left) and her mother, Ann Rector, talk to KID president Linda Ginzel with Best Friend Award Night Chair Leslie Batterson.





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## KID DC Reception

Couldn't get to Chicago for the Best Friend Award Night? Join us as we present the 2004 Best Friend Award to Rachel Weintraub who also missed the Chicago event. Her son Ezra was born that day. Congressional Representatives Jan Schakowsky, Rahm Emanuel, Jesse Jackson, Jr. and Jim McDermott are our Honorary co-chairs for this informal reception at Mimi's American Bistro in Washington on Tuesday, September 28th, suggested \$50 donation. Visit [www.KidsInDanger.org](http://www.KidsInDanger.org) for information or call 312-595-0649.

## Donor & Supporter Notes

Thanks to all who enjoyed dining in June at the **Signature Room** in Chicago's John Hancock Building. As Charity of the Month, KID receives \$2,672 as a percentage of dinners from the Signature Select Menu.

**Underwriters Laboratories Inc.** has recently granted KID \$25,000 to further our Teach Early Safety Testing (TEST) program. UL has been a supporter of this program since its inception.

Thanks to **Thomas Wood & Felicia Pratto, Matt Glucksberg & Harriet Stratis, Ginny Jones, Gregory L. Murphy, Jerry & Charlene Porras, David Schwartz & Corey Rosen, Laura Delman, Darwin Voltin and Robert & Hannah Mooi** who all recently renewed their support to KID. Please consider supporting the important programs outlined in this newsletter through a donation online at [www.KidsInDanger.org](http://www.KidsInDanger.org) or use the enclosed return envelope. We count on your support.

Kids In Danger is delighted to welcome **Shawn Kasserman** to our Board of Directors. Shawn is a partner with the law offices of Corboy & Demetrio in Chicago and was recently named one of the **Forty Illinois Attorneys Under the Age of Forty to Watch** by the Law Bulletin Publishing Company.

## A Reminder

Just a reminder that dangerous yo-yo water balls, including new designs for Halloween, continue to be sold through catalogs and in stores despite almost 400 reports to the CPSC about incidents including near strangulation and eye damage. The CPSC has yet to take action, so we urge parents and caregivers to BAN these dangerous toys from homes, childcare facilities and schools. Visit [www.kidsindanger.org](http://www.kidsindanger.org) and read Andrew's story in our new **Family Voices** section for more information on this dangerous product.

