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## **Buy Eye-Friendly Toys for a Safe and Stimulating Holiday**

**Portland, OR, Nov. 25, 2009** – With the busiest shopping weekend ahead, the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association encourages you to buy eye-friendly toys this holiday season. This can help your child avoid serious eye injuries *and* actually stimulate their vision and learning abilities.

Each year, approximately 11,000 eye injuries sustained by children are caused by toys or home playground equipment according to a 2004 Children's Eye Safety report from **Prevent Blindness America**.

"Often adults are in a rush when they're shopping and they may be tempted to make a snap decision to choose a toy that just looks attractive," said Dr. Todd Briscoe, Portland-area optometric physician and member of the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association. "But they may not have considered the safety of the toy, and how it could potentially injure their child's eyesight. This year, we'd like parents to keep this in mind while shopping."

In general, the OOPA recommends parents avoid toys with pointed, sharp or rough edges or pieces. Blocks are great for almost any age as long as corners and edges are blunted to reduce the risk of eye injury. Also, beware of long-handled toys, like mops, brooms, pony sticks and rakes to avoid eye injuries. Make sure that they have rounded handles and closely watch children under age two with such toys. Be careful to avoid toys that may be age appropriate for an older child but could be dangerous for a younger child. Always supervise children in situations when they might share an inappropriate toy with a younger sibling.

Last, avoid flying toys, projectile-firing toys, slingshots, dart guns and arrows for children under age six. BB and pellet guns, bows and arrows, and darts are extremely dangerous. Ideally, these toys should be avoided completely, especially when there are younger children in the house. If that is not possible, supervise any child with these toys, because they have the potential to be harmful.

"On a positive note, great toys for children are those that stimulate visual development, improve hand-eye coordination and demonstrate spatial relationships," added Briscoe.

The American Optometric Association (AOA), the OOPA's parent organization, recommends the following toys for kids **under** age 2:

- brightly colored mobiles
- stuffed animals
- activity gyms
- blocks, balls
- stacking and nesting toys
- buckets and measuring cups



- puzzles
- shape sorters
- musical toys

Appropriate and eye-friendly toys for children **over** age 2 include:

- child-sized household items like vacuums
- rakes
- lawn mowers
- refrigerator and stove sets and outside toys like sandboxes
- riding toys and backyard gyms and swings.

Magnetic letters, stringing beads, toy cash registers are great for fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Some toys are simply not safe and may be recalled by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). For a list of toy recalls, call (800) 638-2772 or visit [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

**About the American Optometric Association (AOA):** *The American Optometric Association represents approximately 36,000 doctors of optometry, optometry students and paraoptometric assistants and technicians. Optometrists serve patients in nearly 6,500 communities across the country, and in 3,500 of those communities are the only eye doctors. Doctors of optometry provide two-thirds of all primary eye care in the United States. For more information, visit [www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org).*

**About the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association (OOPA):** *The Oregon Optometric Physicians Association is a statewide organization comprised of optometric physicians, college of optometry faculty, optometric students and industry-related associates. It advocates advancing the quality, availability and accessibility of eye, vision and related health care. It also works to represent the profession of optometry, to enhance and promote the independent and ethical decision making of its members, and to assist optometric physicians in practicing the highest standards of patient care. Based in Milwaukie, Oregon, the OOPA has nearly 400 members. For more information, visit [www.oregonoptometry.org](http://www.oregonoptometry.org).*

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**Photo:**



**Caption:** *Great toys for children are those that stimulate visual development, improve hand-eye coordination and demonstrate spatial relationships.*