

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

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Noisy Toys, Dangerous Play



Parents may think that noise is a problem they need not worry about until their child reaches the teenage years. Not so. Some toys are so loud that they can cause hearing damage in children. Some toy sirens and squeaky rubber toys can emit sounds of 90 decibels (dB). These sounds can be as loud as a lawnmower and dangerous to a child's hearing. Workers would have to wear ear protection for similarly noisy sounds on the job.

The danger with noisy toys is greater than the 90 dB-level implies. When held directly to the ear, as children often do, a noisy toy actually exposes the ear to as much as 120 dB of sound, a damaging dose—the equivalent of a jet plane taking off. Noise at this level is painful and can result in permanent hearing loss.

**More information
about noise**

Toys that pose a noise danger include cap guns, talking dolls, vehicles with horns and sirens, walkie talkies, musical instruments, household toys like vacuum cleaners, and toys with cranks. Parents who have normal hearing need to inspect toys for noise danger just as they would for small pieces that can be easily swallowed.

Prior to purchasing a new toy, parents or others who buy toys for children should listen to the toy. If the toy sounds loud, it should not be purchased.

Toys already at home should also be examined. Batteries can be removed or toys discarded if they are too noisy and pose a potential danger to hearing.

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