

Pointers For Parents

Making Sure Gifts Are Nontoxic

(NAPSA)—Finding children's gifts that are both safe and fun can be easy—despite the recent media attention given to high levels of lead in certain imported items.

Still, the seemingly endless string of recalls has left many parents and caregivers scratching their heads when they gift shop.

It is key, say experts, to pay careful attention to where the gifts you choose have come from and to look for safety certifications from trusted organizations.

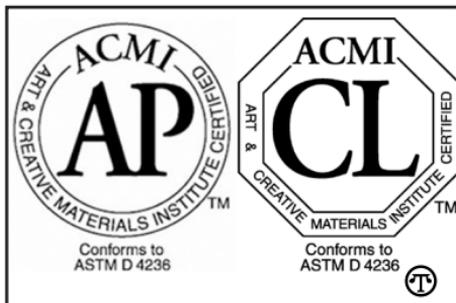
For instance, people shopping for art supplies for their kids should look for materials certified by the Art & Creative Materials Institute (ACMI). All ACMI-certified children's products are tested for lead as a requirement for initial certification and later reviews. In addition, Institute-member manufacturers have their products tested for lead at other intervals.

Safe Kids, Safe Adults

For over 65 years, the Institute has certified children's art materials as nontoxic. It expanded its program in 1982 to include adult art materials, helping to ensure that health warnings appear on adult products if needed. All certified children's materials, however, must be nontoxic and cannot have any health warnings.

Review and Testing

The toxicology portion of the Institute's program is directed by Woodhall Stopford, M.D., MSPH, of Duke University Medical Center, in consultation with the group's Toxicological Advisory Board of four leading toxicological experts. Certi-



Parents can find gifts that are certified as nontoxic.

fied products undergo a rigorous toxicological review that examines routes of exposure and common product use and misuse—especially by a small child. Additionally, each ingredient, its quantity and its possible adverse interaction with other ingredients are considered, as is any potential harm the material might cause to any part of the human body.

Choosing Products

The group offers two different seals on products:

- Products bearing the AP Seal are certified to contain no materials in sufficient quantities to be toxic or injurious to humans, including children, or to cause acute or chronic health problems. Some products bearing the seal may also be certified to meet specific performance requirements and the label will also indicate this fact.

- The 15 percent of adult products bearing the CL Seal are certified as properly labeled for any known health risks and with information on the safe and proper use of these materials.

For more information, visit www.acminet.org.