

A Minefield of Danger: *Children's Product Recalls in 2002*

Executive Summary

Our children eat, sleep and play in a minefield of dangerous children's products. In 2001, an estimated 69,500 children under age five were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with nursery products. Sixty-five children die annually in such incidents.

Recalled products are but one source of product injury to children, yet the volume of recalls underscores the dangers faced by our children everyday. Compelled by these dangers, Kids In Danger undertook this report to educate the public about the great risk to children posed by recalled juvenile products.

Of 210 consumer products recalled by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in 2002, 90 of these were items intended for use by or care of children (43%). This accounts for over 11 million individual recalled units. Other findings of the report include:

- Fifty-six percent of all children's product recalls in 2002 were toys. Sporting products followed at 23%, nursery products at 13% and clothing at 8%.
- The recall of 4 million plush Snuggle bears was the largest children's product recall by unit in 2002. The eyes and noses of the bears can come off, posing a choking hazard to children.
- The highest number of injuries reported was for mountain bicycles recalled by Brunswick Corp. Prior to the recall, the company received 31 reports of injuries to children and teenagers including serious head injuries, bodily abrasions, bruises and chipped teeth when the bike suspension forks broke apart, causing the rider to lose control of the bike.
- With 29 recalls (32%), choking was the top hazard of children's product recalls in 2002. Falls followed at 23% and bodily injury at 14%.
- Several products were recalled in 2002 for failure to meet existing federal safety regulations. Five products violated the Federal Hazardous Substance Act and one product violated the Federal Flammable Fabrics Act.
- Many nursery products with a track record of product failure and injury continue to be recalled for the same product faults that were identified in earlier recalls.

Based on this analysis, Kids In Danger recommends that:

- The public learn more about the lopsided children's product safety system in America.
- The CPSC work with the industry to develop strict, mandatory standards for durable children's products and enforce compliance.
- Policymakers and product manufacturers work together to develop a strategy that addresses the need for pre-market testing of durable children's products.
- Juvenile product manufacturers proactively inform consumers in the event of a children's product recall and eliminate dangerous products from children's environments.

Kids In Danger is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety. This report is based on public information about recalls released by the CPSC.

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Introduction

Our children eat, sleep and play in a minefield of dangerous children's products. From choking to falls to burns, many juvenile products pose serious, hidden threats to children, while most parents and caregivers are often unaware of the danger.

Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death for children between the ages of zero and fourteen years. Each year, more children die from injuries than from all childhood diseases combined.¹ Nursery products alone pose grave dangers to children. In 2001, an estimated 69,500 children under age five were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with nursery products.² Sixty-five children die annually in such incidents. Countless other juvenile products including clothing, sporting goods and toys are responsible for many more unintentional injuries each year. In 2001, 25 children died in toy-related incidents and another 255,100 were injured.

**Nursery products
kill 65 children each
year. Nearly 70,000
more are seriously
injured.**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is the independent federal regulatory agency charged with the mission of saving lives and keeping families safe by reducing the risk of injuries and deaths associated with consumer products. One such action that the CPSC takes in the pursuit of this mission is the recall of consumer goods. The CPSC announces recalls of products that present a significant risk to consumers either because the product may be defective or violates a mandatory standard issued by the CPSC.

Although children's products comprise just a small segment of goods under the CPSC's jurisdiction, in recent years children's product recalls have accounted for over half of all recalls issued in a given year.³ Compelled by these dangers, Kids In Danger undertook this report to educate the public about the great risk to children posed by recalled juvenile products. *A Minefield of Danger* examines all children's products recalled by the CPSC in calendar year 2002 and proposes actions that the CPSC, juvenile product manufacturers, policymakers and the public can take to improve the safety of children's products.

In researching *A Minefield of Danger*, recall press releases issued jointly by the product manufacturer and the CPSC were examined and children's products were recorded (Appendix A). A children's product is any product designed or intended for the care of or use by children. For example, Radio Flyer Inc. recalled 59,000 Model 8 Roadsters in July 2002 because the product poses a choking hazard to young children.

¹ *Safety News*, Web site of the Center for Childhood Safety at Children's Memorial Hospital, <http://www.childrensmemorial.org/parents/safetynews/safetycenter.asp>, January 29, 2003.

² *Nursery Product-Related Injuries and Deaths to Children under Age Five*, Memorandum of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, July 5, 2002.

³ *Clear and Present Dangers: Children's Product Recalls in 2001*, Kids In Danger Research Report, February 2001.

Many other products that may pose a danger to children but are not intended for their use or care are not included in this report. For example, there were seven recalls issued for candle products in 2002. Candles pose a significant risk to consumers of all ages. In fact, candle-related deaths increased 750 percent from 1980 (20 deaths) to 1998 (170 deaths).⁴ Reports indicate that a child playing with a candle itself or near a candle is one of the biggest contributors to candle fires. Despite the danger to children from candle-related fires and burns, candles are not included in this report because the product is not intended for use by children.

Children's Products Account for Nearly Half of All Recalled Products in 2002

Created by Congress under the Consumer Product Safety Act of 1972, the CPSC has been in operation since 1973. The CPSC has jurisdiction over more than 15,000 types of consumer products. Most children's products fall under the CPSC's jurisdiction with the notable exception of car seats, which are regulated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The CPSC is headed by Hal Stratton, who was confirmed as the Commission's eighth Chairman in July 2002.

In calendar year 2002, the CPSC issued 210 recalls. Of these recalls, 90 (43%) were children's products. Children's products were recalled, on average, nearly two times per week (1.7) in 2002. These children's product recalls account for over 11 million individual units.

Almost half of all recalls last year were children's products.

Children's products are categorized into four major types of products in *A Minefield of Danger*. These categories include clothing, nursery products, sporting products and toys. Fifty-six percent of all children's product recalls in 2002 were toys. Sporting products followed at 23%, nursery products at 13% and clothing at 8%.

Table 1: CPSC Recalls in 2002

	# Recalls	% Recalls	% Children's	# Units
All Recalls	210	100%		
Children's	90	43%	100%	11,155,631
clothing	7	3%	8%	96,760
nursery	12	6%	13%	582,135
sports	21	10%	23%	2,181,180
toys	50	24%	56%	8,295,556

⁴ CPSC Releases New Report on Residential Fires, [Press release of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#), June 21, 2001.

Three Juvenile Product Manufacturers Issue Recalls of Over 1 Million Units

In 2002, three children's product recalls accounted for over 1 million units per recall. The following table shows the top children's product recalls with the largest number of units recalled last year.

Table 2: Top Ten Children's Product Recalls by Unit in 2002

Product	Manufacturer	# Injuries	Hazard	# Units
plush Snuggle bears	Unilever Home and Personal Care USA	0	choking	4,000,000
portable basketball hoops	Lifetime Products, Inc.	27	bodily injury	1,700,000
bamboo stick sparklers	Elkton Enterprises, Inc.	4	fire and burn	1,500,000
toy attachments on baby walkers	Kolcraft Enterprises, Inc.	15	cuts	410,000
stuffed polyester pool animals	Dollar Tree Stores, Inc.	0	choking	310,000
spray foam	Jakks Pacific, Inc.	1	bodily injury	296,000
animal toy sponges	Dollar Tree Stores, Inc.	0	choking	280,000
cotton candy machines	Rose Art Industries, Inc.	2	fire and burn	188,000
engines used on fun-karts	Briggs & Stratton Corp.	4	fire and burn	160,000
talking electronic dolls	Lovee Doll & Toy Co., Inc.	0	choking	160,000

The recall of 4,000,000 plush Snuggle bears was the largest children's product recall by unit in 2002. The eyes and noses of the bears can come off, posing a choking hazard to young children. The majority of these bears were given away as a premium to consumers who purchased Snuggle fabric softener.

These 'freebie' products led to recalls in 2002.



Unilever's plush Snuggle bears, McDonald's bobble head toys, and two folding children's chairs were recalled in 2002. All of these products were offered for free or a reduced cost to consumers.

Pictured above at center, Hilton Hotels recalled 27,000 Vacation Station children's coolers/chairs after a two-year-old boy's fingertip was severed when the chair collapsed. The chairs were distributed for free to hotel guests with children. In a similar incident, Intercon Merchandising Source recalled 100,000 Time Out folding mini beach chairs after the tip of a three-year-old girl's finger was amputated when the chair collapsed. The beach chair was a free gift with the purchase of a Time Out cosmetic product at Sears stores.

Children Suffer Severe Injuries From Recalled Children's Products

Press releases issued by the CPSC demonstrate that 207 children were injured by children's products recalled in 2002. While children's products represent 43% of recalled products in 2002, half (50%) of all injuries reported were the result of defective children's products.

The following table illustrates children's product recalls in 2002 that caused the greatest number of reported injuries to children prior to the recall.

Table 3: Top Children's Product Recalls by Total Injuries in 2002

Product	Manufacturer	# Units	Hazard	# Injuries
mountain bicycles	Brunswick Corp.	103,000	falls	31
portable basketball hoops	Lifetime Products, Inc.	1,700,000	bodily injury	27
NEXT ultra shock mountain bicycles	BY US International Co. Ltd.	132,000	falls	19
toy attachments on baby walkers	Kolcraft Enterprises, Inc.	410,000	cuts	15
air powered rockets	Estes Industries	140,000	bodily injury	12
portable basketball hoops	Huffy Sports Company	70,000	bodily injury	10
soap making kits	Rose Art Industries Inc.	124,400	burns	10
junior-sized compound Bear Archery bows	Bear Archery LLC	2,250	bodily injury	7
Pop 'n Scoot ride-on toys	The Little Tikes Company	21,400	falls	7
mountain bicycles	Dynacraft Industries Inc.	4,700	falls	6

The product recall responsible for the highest number of reported injuries in 2002 was mountain bicycles recalled by Brunswick Corp. Prior to the recall, the company received 31 reports of injuries to children and teenagers including serious head injuries, bodily abrasions, bruises and chipped teeth when the bike suspension forks broke apart, causing the rider to lose control of the bike.

Mountain bicycles are but one example of a product that caused serious injuries to children in 2002. Several juvenile product recalls in 2002 were prompted by reports of severe injuries. The following compilation describes the type of injuries inflicted on children by these defective products.

➤ **Estes Industries air powered rockets**

Six children were struck in the face by rockets when the product's foam tips broke off. Of the children injured, two suffered detached retinas and four suffered lacerations that required stitches or sutures. Another six reports of hand lacerations were received as a result of broken pump handles.

➤ **Lifetime Products portable basketball hoops**

27 injuries were reported including scrapes, deep lacerations and bruises.

- **Rose Art soap making kit**
Ten children were burned by hot soap while removing the product's plastic container from the microwave.
- **Childcraft Education Corp. changing table**
Two children had their fingers caught inside the hinges of the table door. One child required stitches while the other needed surgery.
- **Little Tikes Pop n' Scoot ride-on toys**
Seven children were injured when they fell over the handlebars of the ride-on toy. Injuries included damaged teeth, stitches to the chin, cuts and scratches.



Little Tikes recalled 21,400 Pop n' Scoot ride-on toys after 10 children fell over the toy's handlebars. Seven children suffered injuries.

Children's Product Recalls Pose Serious Hazards to Children

With 29 recalls (32%), choking was the top hazard of children's product recalls in 2002. The vast majority (83%) of choking hazards presented were from toys with small parts that could detach and/or break off. Clothing items accounted for the remaining choking hazards (17%). Most clothing recalls prompted by a choking hazard were for buttons or decorative elements that could detach easily.

Falls (23%) and bodily injury (14%) were the second and third top hazards of children's product recalls in 2002, respectively.

Table 4: Top Ten Hazards of Children's Product Recalls in 2002

Hazard	# Recalls	% of Total
choking	29	32%
falls	21	23%
bodily injury	13	14%
other	8	9%
fire	6	7%
cuts	4	4%
lead poisoning	3	3%
burns	2	2%
chemical burns	2	2%
pinching	2	2%

Eight Companies Issue Multiple Recalls

Of 82 juvenile product manufacturers that issued recalls in 2002, eight of these companies recalled two children's products in 2002. BRIO Corp. and Kolcraft Enterprises, Inc. both issued multiple children's product recalls in 2001 as well.

Table 5: Companies with Two Product Recalls in 2002

Manufacturer	Product	# Units	Hazards	Injuries
BRIO Corp.	plan toys pull-along snails	3,000	choking	0
	pull-along caterpillars	1,000	choking	0
Cannondale Corp.	bicycles	1,300	bodily injury	1
	Gemini bicycles	700	falls	1
Dollar Tree Stores Inc.	stuffed polyester pool animals	310,000	choking	0
	animal toy sponges	280,000	choking	0
Graco Children's Products Inc.	children's activity center toy tracks	152,000	choking	5
	snack and activity trays	8,900	choking	0
Kolcraft Enterprises, Inc.	toy attachments on baby walkers	410,000	cuts	15
	toy steering wheel on strollers	17,000	choking	0
Pottery Barn Kids	ride-on duck toy	3,000	choking	0
	star clacker wooden toy	3,800	choking	0
Radio Flyer Inc.	Model 8 Roadsters	59,000	choking	0
	little wooden push cars	15,000	choking	0
Rose Art Industries Inc.	soap making kits	124,400	burns	10
	cotton candy machines	188,000	fire and burns	2

Failure Incidents Accrue in Large Numbers Prior to Product Recalls

In the event of a product defect or incident, some consumers contact the product's manufacturer to prompt a response. Under Section 15(b) of the Consumer Product Safety Act, product manufacturers are required to self-report such incidents to the CPSC. In some cases these failure reports lead to a product recall.

Of 90 children's products recalled in 2002, 943 failure incidents were reported prior to the product recall. The following table displays the top ten products with the largest number of reported failure incidents.

Table 6: Top Ten Children's Product Recalls by Failure Incidents

Manufacturer	Product	# Units	Hazards	# Failures
Rose Art Industries Inc.	cotton candy machines	188,000	fire and burn	225
Bear Archery LLC	junior-sized compound Bear Archery bows	2,250	bodily injury	200
Estes Industries	air powered rockets	140,000	bodily injury	84
Specialized Bicycle Components Inc.	bicycles	2,200	falls	39
Brunswick Corp.	mountain bicycles	103,000	falls	34
Unilever Home and Personal Care USA	plush Snuggle bears	4,000,000	choking	32
Lifetime Products Inc.	portable basketball hoops	1,700,000	bodily injury	27
Vermont Precision Woodworks	cribs	900	entrapment	21
BY US International Co. Ltd.	NEXT ultra shock mountain bicycles	132,000	falls	20
Radio Flyer Inc.	Model 8 Roadsters	59,000	choking	19

In 2002, two children's products were recalled after the manufacturer received over 200 reports of product failures. Rose Art Industries Inc. received 225 reports of their cotton candy machines overheating and three reports of fire, one resulting in \$2,000 in property damage. Bear Archery's recall of junior sized compound bows occurred after the company received 200 reports of the bows breaking during use, resulting in seven injuries.

Children's Product Recall Trends since 2000

A review of children's product recalls over the past three years shows that while the number of product recalls has decreased moderately since 2000, there has been a significant decrease in the number of individual units recalled by children's product manufacturers.

Table 7: Children's Product Recalls 2000 to 2002

Year	# Recalls	# Units
2002	90	11,155,631
2001	118	22,992,667
2000	99	37,559,600

Despite the decrease in recalled units since 2000, it is clear that children's products continue to threaten the safety of our most vulnerable population. The number of children's product recalls in 2002, high failure rate of juvenile products, and number of injuries inflicted on children are all apparent indications that children are at risk of serious injury and death from dangerous children's products.

Moreover, because the CPSC relies heavily on the media to carry the message of product recalls, most people do not hear about most recalls. In fact, a recent survey revealed that most people

say they hear about children's product recalls only two or three times per year.⁵ In 2002, children's products were recalled on average almost twice per week. So long as dangerous and recalled products remain in circulation, failure incidents, injuries and deaths will continue to accrue long after a recall is issued.

Such was the case of an eight-month-old infant boy from Indiana who died in a Century Lil' Napper infant swing in 2002. Manufactured by Century from 1991 to 1997, the swings have shoulder harness straps that are placed over each shoulder and buckled between the infant's legs. If the straps on these swings loosen or are unbuckled, an infant can become tangled in the straps and strangle. Century issued a recall for the swings in 1997 after receiving three reports of deaths and one report of a near strangulation. The Indiana infant was the fifth victim claimed by the Lil' Napper swing. As with most recalled children's products, many of the 125,000 swings originally sold could still be in use.

Children's Product Recalls are Preventable

Children's product recalls are but a symptom of a flawed children's product safety system. A closer look at the reasons why children's products were recalled last year reveals that many children's product recalls in 2002 were preventable. Moreover, many of these recalls wouldn't have been necessary had the product manufacturer's interests been focused on consumer safety.

Children's products recalls in 2002 were motivated by myriad factors. These include:

- Risk posed to consumers;
- Injuries reported;
- Failures reported;
- Violation of mandatory safety standards.

A total of six children's products were recalled in 2002 because they violated federal safety standards. In November, Estyle, Inc. recalled children's Ultimate Snuggle Jackets because the garments do not meet the standard for flammability for clothing textiles under the Federal Flammable Fabrics Act. Enforced solely by the CPSC, the act covers general wearing apparel, children's sleepwear, carpets, rugs, mattresses and mattress pads. A product that is found in violation of this act can ignite easily, thereby presenting a serious risk of burn injuries to consumers. Typically, fabrics that do not comply with federal mandatory standards for fabric flammability burn faster than newspaper.

Another children's product recalled in 2002 for violation of federal standards is a star wooden clacker toy. Manufactured by Pottery Barn Kids, the toy poses a choking hazard and is in violation of the Federal Hazardous Substance Act for design and construction of baby rattles, due to the handle length.

⁵ *The 2001 Annual Survey of Illinois Voters*, [Coalition for Consumer Rights](#), 2001.



Three children's products, including this pedal car manufactured by Alpha International, were recalled last year because they contain high lead levels in violation of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act.

Four products were recalled in 2002 because the items contain harmful substances in violation of federal standards for children's products. Alpha International's pedal cars, McDonald's bobble head figurines, and Wear Me Apparel's infant girls' garments were all recalled because they pose a lead poisoning hazard to children. Lead poisoning is a serious danger, particularly to children under age six whose brains and nervous systems are still developing. The blood brain barrier has not fully formed by age six, which increases the

chances of severe damage due to lead exposure. A child's body can absorb up to 50% of the lead ingested, leading to life-altering conditions. Among these are damage to the nervous system and brain, behavioral problems, learning disorders, delayed/slowed growth, hearing problems and headaches.⁶

The CPSC is responsible for enforcing the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (FHSA). Under the FHSA, toys or other articles intended for children that expose children to hazardous amounts of lead are banned. All three products recalled for lead hazards in 2002 were found to contain high lead levels in violation of the FHSA. In a statement issued by the CPSC, the Commission stated that "had the manufacturers of these lead-containing products acted with prudence and foresight before introducing the products into commerce, they would not have used lead at all."⁷

Petroleum distillates are another harmful substance found in a recalled children's product in 2002. Recalled in April, Hallmark Card's Harry Potter key chains can leak petroleum distillates, posing an ingestion hazard to children. Also known as aliphatic hydrocarbons, petroleum distillates affect the respiratory system. Upon ingestion, the substance may cause chemical pneumonia, pulmonary damage, and possible death due to aspiration into the lungs.⁸ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warns consumers of the serious risks posed by petroleum distillates, stating that "products which contain petroleum distillates should be used carefully. Always keep petroleum distillate products out of reach of children."⁹

⁶ *Lead Poisoning Dangers*, Lead Poisoning News: A Lead Poisoning Information & Resource Site, <http://www.lead-poisoning-news.com/html/dangers.html>, January 27, 2003.

⁷ *Guidance for Lead (Pb) in Consumer Products*, Statement of Guidance issued to manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers by the CPSC, February 4, 2003.

⁸ McCann, Michael. *Health Hazards of Solvents*, 1994.

⁹ *Petroleum Distillates*, Web site of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, <http://www.epa.gov/grtlakes/seahome/housewaste/house/petrol.htm>, February 4, 2003.

Mandatory Standards Needed to Protect Children

Currently, most children's products in the United States are not covered by mandatory safety standards. Rather, voluntary standards are set by the juvenile product industry. The CPSC works with the industry to develop voluntary standards however the Commission does not have the authority to enforce compliance. In many cases, weak voluntary standards lead to product failure and injuries to children.

Founded in 1898, ASTM International is a not-for-profit organization that develops and publishes voluntary safety standards for many children's products. Data from *A Minefield of Danger* shows that several children's products that were recalled in 2002 were manufactured to meet ASTM International standards. These include Graco Children's Products' Snack and Activity trays, Kolcraft Enterprises Inc.'s strollers and Kolcraft's baby walkers. Despite being tested to ASTM standards, these products were recalled because they pose a risk or caused injuries to children. This is a clear indication that the standards that exist for today's juvenile products are not strong enough to ensure our children's safety. So long as juvenile product manufacturers do not have to comply with tough standards, children's product recalls will continue to occur.

When used by the CPSC to improve safety, voluntary standards can play an important role in protecting children. Children's product manufacturers Bike Pro and the Oriental International Trading Company recalled baby walkers last year to prevent the possibility of injury. The walkers can fit through a standard doorway and are not designed to stop at the edge of a step. Babies using these walkers could be seriously injured or killed if they fall down stairs.

In 1997, the CPSC worked with industry to revise the voluntary standard for baby walkers to address falls down stairs. New walkers that meet the voluntary standard have special features that stop the walker at the top step. As a result, baby walker related injuries to children under 15 months old have declined over 60 percent from 1995 to 2000.

KID commends the CPSC's involvement in revising the voluntary baby walker standard and is encouraged that Bike Pro and the Oriental International Trading Company issued the recall as a preventative measure in compliance with the voluntary standard. KID urges the CPSC to take similar action with regard to voluntary standards for other types of children's products. By pushing manufacturers to comply with a voluntary standard, the CPSC can make a measurable difference in our children's safety by preventing injuries before they happen.

Several other nursery product recalls in 2002 highlight the urgent need for strong safety standards for children's products. In March of 2002, Tough Traveler Ltd. recalled its child backpack carriers because children could fall from the carrier when the product's safety harness is not used. A second infant carrier/car seat was recalled by the Dorel Juvenile Group in May of 2002. When used as a carrier, the plastic handle can unexpectedly release and infants can fall to the ground and suffer injuries.

Both types of infant carriers, soft-sided front or backpack models and hard handled seat-type carriers, are products with a history of safety failure. Over the past ten years the CPSC has

issued 21 recalls of infant carriers for risks of falls and strangulation. The Swedish company Baby Björn issued a recall of infant carriers in 1999 after they received nine reports of infants that slipped out of the carrier's leg holes and fell to the ground. Six of these infants suffered skull fractures. Although Baby Björn was aware of the product's failure and severity of injuries to infants, the company did not issue a recall until 1999, three and a half years after the first infant had fractured his skull.¹⁰ Over 10 million units of hard-handled infant carriers have been recalled since 1994 because of handle failure. To date, infant carriers are not covered by a mandatory standard for safety. If this measure had been in place, neither infant carrier recall issued in 2002 would have been necessary.

Children's toy chests are another example of a nursery product with the potential to cause serious injury and death to children. In 2002, two companies issued recalls for toy chests. Southern Wood Products' toy boxes were manufactured with a support hinge that can collapse suddenly and cause an injury to a child's head, neck, finger or hands. The product also poses an entrapment hazard to young children. Juvenile product manufacturer XL Machine recalled Playskool toy chests for similar injury hazards. Sold at Target stores nationwide, the Playskool chests' support hinges can loosen over time, causing the chest to collapse suddenly with possible injuries to children's head, neck, fingers or hands.



Six children suffocated in Lane cedar chests before the recall in 1996. Two toy chests, including this one made by Southern Wood Products, were recalled for similar hazards in 2002. To date, no mandatory standard exists for this product.

In the late 1990s, the Lane Co. recalled 12 million cedar chests after receiving reports of six children who suffocated inside the chests. Since the recall, the company learned of another suffocation death and two near fatalities of children who became entrapped in the chests when the lid closed and automatically shut. The Lane recall should have raised a red flag within the industry that tougher safety standards are needed to protect children from similar tragedies. Yet the two toy chest recalls issued in 2002 illustrate that children will continue to be subjected to entrapment and injury hazards in these types of products until mandatory standards are developed and enforced.

¹⁰ Felcher, E. Marla. *Its No Accident: How Corporations Sell Dangerous Baby Products*, Monroe: Common Courage Press, 2001.

Pre-Market Testing Would Reduce Product-Related Injuries and Deaths

In addition to strong, mandatory standards for children's products, KID believes that the pre-market testing of durable children's products is a key component in reducing injury and death in juvenile products. Most consumers wrongly assume that all children's products are tested for safety prior to being put on store shelves, however this is simply not the case. As it now stands, most children's products are not required to be tested by an independent laboratory before they are sold and the CPSC does not certify pre-market testing of children's products.



Vermont Precision's wooden cribs failed the ASTM voluntary standard test for structural integrity. The company received 21 reports of slats detaching before recalling the product.

In 2002, Vermont Precision Woodworks issued a recall for full-size cribs. Prior to the recall, the company received 21 reports of slats detaching from crib drop side rails, creating a large opening between the slats where a child's head or neck could become entrapped. Among all juvenile products, cribs are involved in more infant and toddler deaths than any other. In the last ten years, 540 children have died from crib injuries: a rate of 54 deaths per year.¹¹ The ASTM voluntary standard for full-size baby cribs includes tests for structural integrity of crib components. Vermont Precision Woodworks' cribs failed the ASTM standard test. This recall underscores the need for stringent safety testing of juvenile products prior to being introduced to the marketplace.

The Frequently Asked Questions section of the CPSC web site raises the important issue of the safety testing of consumer goods. The site states:

Q. "Does CPSC test or certify products for safety before they can be sold to consumers?"

A. "No. CPSC doesn't have the legal authority to do that. However, responsible companies test their products before putting them on the market."

KID commends juvenile product manufacturers that take the initiative to test their products for safety before they are sold to consumers. However it is important to note that any company can make the claim of safety testing without having to back it up. From August 1997 to December 2001, children's product manufacturer Rose Art sold a children's soap making kit that was prominently labeled 'Safety Tested' on the container's packaging. Despite the claim, the product was recalled in 2002 after 10 burn injuries occurred.

¹¹ *About the Foundation*, Web site of the Danny Foundation, <http://www.dannyfoundation.org/about.html>, February 4, 2003.

KID calls on the CPSC to investigate all claims of ‘safety testing’ and urges consumers to stay up to date on children’s product safety news and recall bulletins. Until tough legislation requiring independent, pre-market testing of children’s products is in place, our children will continue to live in a minefield of danger.

Conclusion

Kids In Danger finds the following unacceptable:

- Rate at which products are recalled (1.7 per week);
- Number of children’s product recalls as a percentage of all recalls (43%);
- Length of time that must pass and the number of product failures and injuries that must be reported before a product is recalled (Rose Art Industries Inc. received 225 reports of their cotton candy machines overheating and three reports of fire before recalling the product);
- Number of products recalled because of failure to meet existing federal safety regulations (Five products violated the Federal Hazardous Substance Act, one company violated the Federal Flammable Fabrics Act);
- Fact that many nursery products with a track record of product failure and injury continue to be recalled for the same product faults that were identified in earlier recalls (Two toy chest recalls, two infant carrier recalls, one crib recall in 2002).

Kids In Danger recommends that:

- The public learn more about the lopsided children’s product safety system in the United States;
- The CPSC work with the industry to develop strict, mandatory standards for durable children’s products and enforce compliance;
- Policymakers and product manufacturers work together to develop a strategy that addresses the need for pre-market testing of durable children’s products;
- Juvenile product manufacturers proactively inform consumers in the event of a children’s product recall and eliminate dangerous products from children’s environments.

It must be emphasized that the failure incidents and injury statistics listed in this report reflect numbers reported at the time of the recall. It is likely that these numbers are much lower than the actual failure incidents and injuries because incidents and injuries continue to accrue after a recall is issued and not all incidents and injuries are reported.

To learn more about children’s product safety and to find out what you can do to protect your children from dangerous products, please visit www.KidsInDanger.org or contact Kids In Danger at 312-595-0649 or email@KidsInDanger.org.

Methodology

A children's product is defined as any product designed or intended for the care of or use by children. Other products that pose a potential danger to children but are not intended for their use or care are not counted as children's products.

Monthly lists of CPSC press releases in calendar year 2002 were examined. Press releases issued jointly by a product manufacturer and the CPSC reporting children's product recalls were counted and categorized as "children's product" and "other product." Children's product recalls in 2002 posted elsewhere on the CPSC web site were sought and included in this study.

Children's products were further categorized by type of product: clothing, nursery, sports, and toys. The product name, company name, number of units recalled, type of hazard, and incidents of failure and injury were recorded for each (Appendix A).

Sources of data other than those collected from public information about recalls released by the CPSC are noted in footnotes.

About Kids In Danger

Kids In Danger (KID) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety. KID was founded in 1998 by the parents of sixteen-month-old Danny Keysar who died in his Chicago childcare home when a portable crib collapsed around his neck. Although the portable crib had been recalled five years earlier, word of its danger had not reached Danny's parents, caregiver, or a state inspector who visited the home just eight days before Danny's death. To date, 15 children have died in cribs of similar faulty design. And portable cribs are just one of the myriad children's products that may prove to be dangerous.

KID's mission is to **promote** the development of safer children's products, **advocate** for a legislative and regulatory strategy for children's product safety and **educate** the public, especially parents and caregivers, about dangerous children's products.

To fulfill its mission, KID:

- Reaches out to parents, caregivers, service providers and others through workshops on dangerous children's products, media coverage, speaking engagements, and printed materials;
- Works to prohibit the sale of dangerous children's products or their use in childcare facilities, and to push for independent pre-market testing of children's products;
- Encourages designers and engineers to build safety into each product and promotes the development of the safest products possible for our children.

KID's goal is to create a secure environment for children by ensuring that safer products are manufactured, improving recall effectiveness, and encouraging parents and caregivers to remove dangerous or recalled products from homes and childcare centers.

Appendix A: Children's Product Recalls in 2002

Clothing

Recall Date	Product Type	Product Recall	Manufacturer	# Units Recalled	Hazard	# Failure Incidents	# Injuries
2/12/02	clothing	newborn girls' garments	OshKosh B'Gosh	21,800	choking	1	0
4/2/02	clothing	girl's capri pant and shirt sets	Federated Merchandising Group	1,000	choking	0	0
5/31/02	clothing	girls short sets	D.A.M. Clothing Inc.	9,200	choking	0	0
11/19/02	clothing	ultimate snuggle jackets	Estyle, Inc.	160	burns	0	0
11/27/02	clothing	infant girls' garments and sandals	Good Lad Apparel	52,000	choking	3	0
12/20/02	clothing	infant girls' garments	Wear Me Apparel Corp.	3,000	lead poisoning	0	0
12/23/02	clothing	children's fleece, two-piece pant sets	Kohl's Department Stores Inc.	9,600	choking	2	0

Nursery Products

Recall Date	Product Type	Product Recall	Manufacturer	# Units Recalled	Hazard	# Failure Incidents	# Injuries
3/25/02	nursery	wooden changing tables with steps	Childcraft Education Corp.	700	pinching	2	2
3/28/02	nursery	child backpack carriers	Tough Traveler Ltd.	135	falls	1	0
4/10/02	nursery	infant swings	Fisher-Price	42,000	falls	7	4
4/25/02	nursery	cribs	Vermont Precision Woodworks	900	entrapment	21	0
5/8/02	nursery	bean bag chairs	Baseline Design	30,000	suffocation and strangulation	3	1
5/20/02	nursery	infant car seats/carriers	Dorel Juvenile Group Inc.	26,000	falls	4	0
5/31/02	nursery	toy boxes	Southern Wood Products	600	entrapment and bodily injury	0	0
9/4/02	nursery	toy chests	XL Machine Ltd.	3,300	bodily injury	1	1
10/9/02	nursery	baby walkers	Bikepro, Inc.	50,000	falls	0	0

Recall Date	Product Type	Product Recall	Manufacturer	# Units Recalled	Hazard	# Failure Incidents	# Injuries
10/10/02	nursery	baby walkers	Oriental International Trading Company	3,500	falls	0	0
11/21/02	nursery	infant swings	Baby Trend Inc.	15,000	falls	10	0
11/21/02	nursery	toy attachments on baby walkers	Kolcraft Enterprises, Inc.	410,000	cuts	15	15

Sporting Products

Recall Date	Product Type	Product Recall	Manufacturer	# Units Recalled	Hazard	# Failure Incidents	# Injuries
1/3/02	sports	“Midget Racer” mini-bicycles	Kent International Inc.	28,000	bodily Injury	0	0
1/10/02	sports	teething rings	Reed & Barton Corp.	200	skin and mouth irritation	0	0
2/28/02	sports	recumbent bicycles	BikeE Corp.	13,500	falls	2	1
3/28/02	sports	portable basketball hoops	Escalade Sports	16,000	bodily injury	1	1
3/28/02	sports	portable basketball hoops	Lifetime Products Inc.	1,700,000	bodily injury	27	27
4/18/02	sports	mountain bicycles	Brunswick Corp.	103,000	falls	34	31
4/25/02	sports	trailer bikes	InSTEP LLC	4,300	falls	10	3
4/25/02	sports	bicycles	Specialized Bicycle Components Inc.	2,200	falls	39	0
5/9/02	sports	mountain bicycles	Rocky Mountain Bicycles	660	falls	1	1
6/20/02	sports	NEXT ultra shock mountain bicycles	BY US International Co. Ltd.	132,000	falls	20	19
7/10/02	sports	mountain bicycles	Dynacraft Industries Inc.	4,700	falls	6	6
7/24/02	sports	bicycle suspension seat posts	Cane Creek Cycling Components	7,700	falls	18	0
8/7/02	sports	skates	National Sporting Goods Corporation	3,600	falls	3	1

Recall Date	Product Type	Product Recall	Manufacturer	# Units Recalled	Hazard	# Failure Incidents	# Injuries
8/15/02	sports	bicycles	Cannondale Corp.	1,300	bodily injury	4	1
8/15/02	sports	mountain bikes	Marin Mountain Bikes	1,000	bodily injury	2	2
8/22/02	sports	mountain bicycle	Answer Products Inc.	850	bodily injury	18	4
8/29/02	sports	BMX freestyle bicycles	Haro Bicycle Corp.	1,100	falls	0	0
9/9/02	sports	portable basketball hoops	Huffy Sports Company	70,000	bodily injury	11	10
10/17/02	sports	bicycles	Lida Bicycle Co.	2,400	falls	4	2
10/24/02	sports	Gemini bicycles	Cannondale Corp.	800	falls	3	1
11/6/02	sports	hand cycles	Sunrise Medical	70	bodily injury	1	1
11/7/02	sports	skateboard ramps	Gen-X Sports Inc.	88,000	falls	1	1

Toys

Recall Date	Product Type	Product Recall	Manufacturer	# Units Recalled	Hazard	# Failure Incidents	# Injuries
1/24/02	toys	children's gel candle kits	Value City and Schottenstein stores	2,300	fire and burn	2	1
2/12/02	toys	Zowie's 123 children's books	Disney Children's Book Group, LLC	5,180	choking	1	0
2/20/02	toys	pedal cars	Alpha International Inc.	75,000	lead poisoning	0	0
2/20/02	toys	Monsters in the Closet children's board books	Random House Inc.	39,000	choking	0	0
2/20/02	toys	plush Snuggle® bears	Unilever Home and Personal Care USA	4,000,000	choking	32	0
2/21/02	toys	snack and activity Trays	Graco Children's Products, Inc.	8,900	choking	0	0
3/14/02	toys	soap making kits	Rose Art Industries Inc.	124,400	burns	10	10
4/2/02	toys	maze toys	Discovery Toys	21,000	choking	9	0

Recall Date	Product Type	Product Recall	Manufacturer	# Units Recalled	Hazard	# Failure Incidents	# Injuries
4/2/02	toys	Time Out mini beach chairs	Intercon Merchandising Source Inc.	100,000	pinching	1	1
4/18/02	toys	air powered rockets	Estes Industries	140,000	bodily injury	84	12
4/18/02	toys	Harry Potter key chains	Hallmark Cards Inc.	7,000	ingestion	0	0
5/1/02	toys	duckie ring rattle/teethers	Prestige Toy Corp.	4,600	choking	0	0
5/21/02	toys	toy steering wheel on strollers	Kolcraft Enterprises, Inc.	17,000	choking	0	0
5/21/02	toys	cotton candy machines	Rose Art Industries Inc.	188,000	fire and burn	225	2
5/24/02	toys	toy planes	Spin Master Toys	137,000	laceration, bruise and abrasion	7	4
5/30/02	toys	big red wagons	Sportsman's Guide	1,000	bodily injury	8	3
5/31/02	toys	soft farm sets	Lands' End, Inc.	600	choking	1	0
6/6/02	toys	radio controlled airplanes	Megatech	3,000	fire and burn	2	0
6/12/02	toys	children's activity center toy tracks	Graco Children's Products Inc.	152,000	choking	11	5
6/12/02	toys	Pop 'n Scoot ride-on toys	The Little Tikes Company	21,400	falls	10	7
6/18/02	toys	little wooden push cars	Radio Flyer Inc.	15,000	choking	3	0
7/1/02	toys	ice shavers	Bath & Body Works Inc.	1,000	cuts	5	5
7/18/02	toys	children's Vacation Station cooler/chairs	Hilton Hotels Corporation	27,000	crushing, cuts or severing	1	1
7/18/02	toys	spray foam	Jakks Pacific Inc.	296,000	bodily injury	8	1
7/25/02	toys	plan toys pull-along snails	BRIO Corp.	3,000	choking	0	0
7/25/02	toys	Toddler Tote toddler activity sets	Lauri Inc.	110,000	choking	0	0
7/25/02	toys	Model 8 Roadsters	Radio Flyer Inc.	59,000	choking	19	0
7/25/02	toys	"Sort & See" sorting box toy	Small World Toys	880	choking	1	0
8/7/02	toys	ride-on duck toy	Pottery Barn Kids	3,000	choking	1	0

Recall Date	Product Type	Product Recall	Manufacturer	# Units Recalled	Hazard	# Failure Incidents	# Injuries
8/7/02	toys	star clacker wooden toy	Pottery Barn Kids	3,800	choking	0	0
8/8/02	toys	engines used on fun-karts	Briggs & Stratton Corp.	160,000	fire and burn	9	4
8/20/02	toys	bridges for modular playgrounds	BCI Burke Company	46	falls	0	0
9/4/02	toys	"Bottle cap bear" key chains	Team Beans LLC	8,000	choking	0	0
9/17/02	toys	Mini E-Bike electric bicycles	EV Global Motors Co.	2,000	fire	5	0
9/17/02	toys	bobble head figurines	McDonald's Corp. and Bobble Dreams USA	100,000	lead poisoning	0	0
10/10/02	toys	pull-along caterpillars	BRIO Corp.	1,000	choking	0	0
10/10/02	toys	stuffed polyester pool animals	Dollar Tree Stores Inc.	310,000	choking	1	0
10/10/02	toys	animal toy sponges	Dollar Tree Stores Inc.	280,000	choking	1	0
10/17/02	toys	teddy bears	IKEA	57,000	aspiration	0	0
11/12/02	toys	school supply sets	Damo Plus Corp.	26,000	cutting	0	0
11/12/02	toys	Kidz Club flashlights	Eveready Battery Co. Inc.	24,000	chemical burns	3	1
11/12/02	toys	swing seats	Miracle Recreation Equipment Company	22,000	cuts	2	2
11/15/02	toys	flashlights and batteries	Halo Burger	9,500	chemical burn and choking	2	2
11/19/02	toys	junior-sized compound bows	Bear Archery LLC	2,250	bodily injury	200	7
11/21/02	toys	plush dolls	The Disney Store, Inc.	14,500	choking	0	0
12/20/02	toys	stuffed bunny toys	Zutano Inc.	3,000	choking	0	0
12/23/02	toys	bamboo stick sparklers	Elkton Sparkler Company Inc.	1,500,000	fire and burn	4	4
12/23/02	toys	electronic dolls	Lovee Doll & Toy Co., Inc.	160,000	choking	0	0
12/26/02	toys	wooden vehicles filled with candy	Kmart Corp.	50,000	choking	0	0