

Press release

Embargo until Thursday, 5 December 2013

Products specifically designed for children are causing injuries that could be avoided.

Vilnius, Thursday, 5 December, 2013 - Each day children are injured when interacting with products in their everyday environment; even with products made especially for children.

Estimates from the EU Injury Data Base identify that each year approximately 19,000 children under 14 years of age in the 28 countries of the European Union will have injuries involving bunk beds, 51,000 will have injuries involving trampolines and a further 52,000 will have toy related injuries that are serious enough to require a visit to the emergency department.(1)

The rapid alert system of the European Commission, RAPEX, reported that the second most frequently identified category of serious risk notifications in 2011 was toys and the sixth was childcare articles and children's equipment – all products specifically designed for children! In the past 5 years there have been 43 RAPEX alerts related to high chairs alone from 13 different Member States. Risks identified in these alerts include choking risks due to detachable or breakable parts of the high chair accessible to the child, fall risks due to a lack of stability in high chair design, non-compliant folding or locking mechanisms or lack of an effective restraint system.(2)

Children are at risk of injury when a product has a design defect, when parts become broken or are missing or when the design creates an unforeseen hazard during its use. Injuries can also occur when a product is not used as intended, when use is age inappropriate or when use is not appropriately supervised. Increased risk of injury can also occur with second hand products if the history of the product is not well known and the product has been damaged, or the complete instructions for safe use are no longer available.

“Children's safety is paramount”, stated Erikas Maciunas, Lithuania's Vice Minister of Health and representative for the EU Lithuanian Presidency. “Children are needlessly suffering preventable injuries and accidents, including many that result from interaction with everyday products. Children across the European Union should be provided with the same level of safety, and that means ensuring safe and affordable child care articles are available for children and their families and that their safe use is understood.”

The European Child Safety Alliance along with its country partners and 3 key sponsors, Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Kid Rapt Ltd. in the United Kingdom and the Consumer Safety Commission (CSC) in France (3), are pleased to release today the Child Product Safety Guide: Potentially dangerous products. The Guide was written to increase knowledge as a step toward reducing child injuries related to products that are in regular use by children and their caregivers. It provides comprehensive information on 26 products (4) that child safety experts in Europe and evidence-based research have identified as posing injury risks to children using the following criteria:

- products that are used by a large proportion of parents and caregivers,
- products that cause either frequent or severe injuries, and

- products that are considered 'safety' products for children, but are widely misused by consumers.

The Guide is meant to raise awareness and educate consumers and professionals to recognise the hidden hazards that a child encounters with products in their daily life and ways to prevent injuries resulting from these products.

For each product the reader is provided with information on:

- why the product may pose a safety problem;
- why it can be dangerous for children;
- what to look for when buying or prior to using the product and lastly;
- advice on how to use the product safely.

"More lives could be saved, pain and suffering from injuries avoided and costs to health care reduced if the advice provided is followed", stated Joanne Vincenten, Director of the European Child Safety Alliance. "The Child Product Safety Guide provides clear and simple essential safety information for parents, caregivers and professionals; to not only help them make smart, safe choices, but also how to put safety into daily practice."

One example is the proper use of a child restraint system, which greatly reduces the chance of ejection from a car.

- An unrestrained child has a 49% chance of ejection in the event of a motor vehicle crash.
- A child incorrectly fastened into an age appropriate child restraint system has a 35% chance of ejection.
- A child correctly fastened in the wrong size child restraint system has a 10% chance of ejection,
- However, a child correctly fastened in an age appropriate child restraint system has only a 3% chance of ejection.

Product safety is enhanced through effective work by manufacturers and standards organisations including regular monitoring and continued improvements in design. But safety is a shared responsibility, and by also enhancing the awareness and knowledge of consumers and professionals on safe interaction with products, children in Europe will lead safer lives.

End

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The complete Child Product Safety Guide is available at www.childsafetyeurope.org

Notes to Journalist.

1. The European Injury Database (IDB) co-funded under the EU-Health programme and managed by Eurosafe. For more information about the IDB:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/data_collection/databases/idb/index_en.htm
2. RAPEX is established as the EU rapid alert system that facilitates the rapid exchange of information between Member States and the Commission on measures taken to prevent or restrict

the marketing or use of products posing a serious risk to the health and safety of consumers with the exception of food, pharmaceutical and medical devices, which are covered by other mechanisms.

<http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/alerts/main/index.cfm?event=main.listNotifications&CFID=3602768&CFTOKEN=86793519&jsessionid=09006264146b129f501c2d3f6729483b521e>

3. Child Product Safety Guide Sponsors:

UL is a premier global independent safety science company that has championed progress for 120 years. Its more than 10,000 professionals are guided by the UL mission to promote safe working and living environments for all people. UL uses research and standards to continually advance and meet ever-evolving safety needs. We partner with businesses, manufacturers, trade associations and international regulatory authorities to bring solutions to a more complex global supply chain. For more information about our certification, testing, inspection, advisory and education services, visit www.ul.com.

Kid Rapt Ltd are suppliers of child safety equipment direct to local authority schemes and we also support our customer base by the dissemination of information on accidental injury prevention.. We have been incorporated since 1992 and in that time have been privileged to have been the chosen partner in many schemes within the UK, including the pivotal English Home Safety Equipment Scheme which was delivered by RoSPA between 2009 and 2011. Carol Ainge, who is the Managing Director of Kid Rapt, is also the Chair of the Institute of Home Safety.

www.childsafety.co.uk/

The Consumer Safety Commission (CSC) is an independent administrative authority in France created in 1983. It has three main missions: to give recommendations on hazardous products or services, to inform consumers about the potential risks when using certain products or services, and to collect information on unintentional injuries. Since its creation the CSC has released nearly 450 opinions on various topics, such as health and body care, housing, sports and leisure, transportation, chemicals, and also childcare and toys, whether everyday items such as a child car seat, a stroller or more specific ones, like sunglasses for children. www.securiteconso.org/

4. List of 26 child related products covered by the Child Product Safety Guide

1. Adult beds
2. Baby walkers
3. Bath seats or rings
4. Bicycles
5. Bunk beds
6. Changing tables
7. Child car seats
8. Child gates / Safety barriers
9. Child sleepwear
10. Cots (baby/infant beds)
11. Fireworks
12. Goals for Soccer or Handball
13. High chairs
14. Lighters: non-child-resistant
15. Pacifiers/soothers and rattles
16. Plastic bags
17. Playground equipment
18. Playpens
19. Small Parts (e.g., balloons, batteries, magnets, marbles)
20. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
21. Strings, cords, and children's jewellery
22. Strollers/pushchairs
23. Toy chests
24. Toys
25. Trampolines
26. Window blind or drapery cords