



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Trouble in Toyland 2025: A.I. bots, toxics present hidden dangers**

*Tests show A.I. toys can have disturbing conversations. Other concerns include unsafe or counterfeit toys bought online.*

**New York City** – For decades, the biggest dangers with toys were choking hazards and lead. In the 40th [Trouble in Toyland report](#), we show that while these problems still exist, technological “advances” since the 1980s have created new, often more alarming issues: Toys that are powered by artificial intelligence that say inappropriate things to children, and toys shipped from overseas that too often contain toxic substances.

“No one should worry about whether or not the toy they’re buying for a child is toxic or dangerous. But in 2025, we’re still finding too many hazards in popular toys. Toy manufacturers must do better to ensure their products are safe before they end up in children’s hands,” said **Natasha Elder, NYPIRG Regional Director.**

#### **In this year’s Trouble in Toyland report, we focus on:**

- Our testing of four toys that contain A.I. chatbots and interact with children. We found some of these toys will talk in-depth about sexually explicit topics, act dismayed when you say you have to leave, and have limited or no parental controls. We also look at privacy concerns because these toys can record your child’s voice and collect other sensitive data, by methods such as facial recognition scans.
- Toys that contain toxics, including toys shipped from other countries that contain lead, phthalates and other toxins.
- Counterfeit toys that are illegal and almost surely weren’t tested for safety, including [fake Labubu dolls](#) that have been [confiscated by the thousands](#) this year.
- Water beads, a longtime threat, which will finally have [some restrictions](#) when marketed as toys.

- Recalled toys, which we bought again this year, even though it's illegal for anyone to sell them.
- Toys that contain button cell batteries or high-powered magnets, both which can be deadly if swallowed.

"If a toy breaks, we know it right away. But if a toy contains toxics such as lead or phthalates, or a chatbot interacts with our child in a way we don't approve of, we don't necessarily know," said [Teresa Murray](#), **Consumer Watchdog Director for U.S. PIRG Education Fund and co-author of the report**. "The scariest part is that we can't actually see all the dangers a toy might pose. That's deeply troubling."

In our digital age, when it's hard enough for parents to keep up with online dangers such as AI on phones and computers, toys are a new, often-unexpected frontier.

### **TIPS TO AVOID UNSAFE TOYS**

- Subscribe to email recall updates from the CPSC and other U.S. government safety agencies available at [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov);
- Shop with NYPIRG's Toy Safety Tips, available at [toysafetytips.org](http://toysafetytips.org);
- Report unsafe toys or toy-related injuries to the CPSC at [SaferProducts.gov](http://SaferProducts.gov);
- Review the recalled toys and compare them to toys in your children's toy boxes;
- Remember, toys on our list are presented as examples of potentially-dangerous toys. Our list is not exhaustive and other hazards may exist;
- Put small parts, or toys broken into small parts, out of reach. Regularly check that toys appropriate for your older children are not left within reach of children who still put things in their mouths;
- Eliminate small magnet and balloon hazards from your home;
- Be aware that toys connected to the Internet, AI enabled, as well as apps and websites, may be collecting
- information about children inappropriately.
- Consider purchases only from known, trusted sellers or the trademark holder. Companies you've never heard of warrant more research.
- If you have a toy or any other product in your hands, look for clues the item may be counterfeit: Does the label list country of origin? This is required for [toys and many other items](#).
- Look for labeling on toys that says it's non-toxic.
- Make sure that anything that's electric says it's UL-approved.

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