



Top tips on receiving second-hand toys

1. A toy should come with instructions (and ideally warnings from the original box). These help you to determine what age the toy is suitable for and whether you should be aware of any safety warnings.
2. When you receive the toy check that it isn't broken before giving it to your child. Check for sharp edges; loose seams, hair or parts; rusty outdoor equipment, etc. If you find anything amiss discard the toy.
3. Check an electrical toy still functions properly. Ideally these toys should be passed on with the batteries removed (to avoid battery leakage which can happen if left for long periods). If batteries are in the toy when you receive it change the batteries upon receipt for new ones and replace all batteries at the same time rather than mixing old and new.
4. Avoid toys that do not look safe, have been patched up or are incomplete.
5. Think about the age suitability of the toy. When you buy a new toy, the packaging will carry warnings such as "not suitable for children under 36 months" – without the packaging this vital information is missing. Use your judgement as a parent and think about whether the toy has small loose parts that could cause a choking hazard. Avoid these toys for under 3's.
6. Check that the toy has not been so well used that it has been patched up by a previous owner. Don't be tempted to buy a patched-up toy as you do not know if the parts inside are safe (the original parts may have been designed to be inaccessible and therefore the materials, chemicals, electrical content or fibres used could all be dangerous if altered). Patching a toy will weaken that area and make it easier for a child to pick apart seams or access internal parts such as batteries or electrics.
7. Be aware that toy legislation changes over time to control newly identified risks. In particular do not accept toys with loose, powerful magnets or stick on suckers or older metal toys with sharp edges.
8. If toys are very old, they are highly unlikely to meet current toy regulations for paints materials or even design content. If you are sharing toys from your own childhood, or a grandparents' favourite toy you would be advised to supervise your child whilst they play and pack them away when you are not around.