***NEWS*  Contact:** (Your Name)

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**The American Academy of Audiology and (Your Name or Practice Here) Cautions Parents on Selecting Noisy Toys this Holiday Season**

Loud toys can damage hearing in children

**(YOUR CITY), State (abbreviated), Date—**The American Academy of Audiology and (Your name or practice name here) urges parents to be cautious when selecting toys this holiday season. Recognizing that tiny ears are particularly susceptible to hearing damage, it is important to check noise levels before purchasing them. “Many parents don’t realize the permanent damage a simple toy can inflict on a child’s hearing,” said (Your name here), a member of the American Academy of Audiology and with (your practice name, company or organization here “When we fail to protect a child’s hearing, the result can be irreversible hearing loss.” The inner ear contains delicate hair cells which do not regrow. Once these are damaged by noise, the result is permanent hearing loss.

“Hearing damage can be from a one-time exposure or cumulative exposures,” said (your last name). “It’s important to note that the 85-decibel level threshold that the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommends is for people with long exposure to the sound for eight hours or more. Having said that, parents and anyone buying toys for children need to be aware of loud noises, particularly toys that have loud bursts—cap guns, popping balloons, air horns, etc.”

[A study released in January 2017 by researchers with the University of Alberta](http://www.canadianaudiologist.ca/issue/volume-3-issue-6-2016/column/science-matters/) in Canada, determined the noise levels of popping balloons. They studied popping them with a pin, blowing them up until they ruptured and crushing them until they burst. The ruptured balloons clocked in at 168 decibels, four decibels louder than a 12-gauge shotgun.

“Toy noise levels should also be tested with children in mind and not assume that toys will be held at a distance from delicate ears,” (your last name) added. The closer the sound source to the child, the louder it will be at their ear.

(Your last name) also advises patients to use phone apps to test the sound levels of toys before buying them. Toys that make noise at or above 85 dBA can contribute to noise-induced hearing loss over time. “If they come in at 85 decibels or higher when holding your phone microphone near them, like your child would hold the toy near their own ear, don’t buy them. It isn’t worth the risk,” said (your last name). Remember, the louder the sound, the faster the damage and damage continues with exposure.

While hearing loss numbers are rising in adults in the U.S., the total number of children with some type of hearing loss is unknown and many cases go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.

“A child with just minimal hearing loss can be missing 50 percent of classroom discussion,” (your last name) explained. These children will need to use extra effort in order to hear what is being said and they often become distracted and exhausted by the end of the day. These characteristics can be mistaken for learning disabilities when what the child needs is management of the hearing loss, typically in the form of hearing aids and other assistive listening devices.

Lack of hearing can lead to behavioral issues, lack of focus, even depression in children. Children with hearing loss often don’t recognize that they can’t hear and parents don’t always know the signs.

“Loud toys aren’t just annoying to parents, they can be a danger to children,” added (your last name). “Parents should exercise caution when buying toys with sound, including video games. With toys and games where you can turn the sound down, set the sound at an acceptable, non-harmful level and teach children to keep them at that level. Also, be vigilant about any signs that may indicate your child is having difficulty with their hearing.” If you are concerned about your child’s hearing, it is worth having a comprehensive hearing test.

# The American Academy of Audiology provides a list of licensed audiologists on its website: [www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org). Click on “Find an Audiologist.”

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The American Academy of Audiology is the world's largest professional organization of, by and for audiologists. Representing the interests of approximately 14,000 audiologists nationwide, the Academy is dedicated to providing quality hearing care services through professional development, education, research, and increased public awareness of hearing and balance disorders. For more information or to find an audiologist, go to [www.howsyourhearing.org](http://www.howsyourhearing.org).