



IMPROVING
CHILDREN'S
PRODUCT
SAFETY



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POLICY & ACTION FROM CONSUMER REPORTS

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4th Anniversary of Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act *Safer Products and Consumers Can Make Better Consumer Product Decisions*

Washington, D.C.-- Consumer Federation of America (CFA), Kids In Danger (KID) and Consumers Union (CU) mark the fourth anniversary of the passage of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA).

On August 14, 2008, the CPSIA was signed into law after a deliberative process and overwhelming bi-partisan support in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. The law includes strong product safety reforms that overhauled the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The law makes consumer products safer by requiring that CPSC issue safety standards for infant and durable products, significantly decreases lead levels in children's products and creates the first comprehensive publicly accessible consumer complaint database. The CPSIA also gives the CPSC the resources it needs to protect the public, requires that children's products are tested before they are sold, requires product registration be offered to consumers for certain infant and durable products, makes toy standards mandatory, bans certain phthalates in children's products, and increases civil penalties that CPSC can assess against violators of CPSC laws.

“The CPSIA has given new life to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The agency now reflects consumer perception of what our nation's product safety net should be. Consumers are safer as a result of the CPSIA and its effective implementation,” stated Rachel Weintraub, Director of Product Safety and Senior Counsel of Consumer Federation of America. “Never in CPSC's history have more rules been promulgated and in such a short time period. These rules will have an important and positive impact on consumers.”

The CPSIA required CPSC to issue mandatory safety standards for infant and toddler durable products. The Danny Keysar Product Safety Notification Act, which this provision is named, requires mandatory standards and testing for specific infant and toddler products, bans the sale, lease or use in commercial settings of cribs that do not meet current safety standards, and requires manufacturers to include product registration cards with new products to facilitate notice of recalled products. CPSC has already promulgated rules for bath seats, portable bed rails, full-size cribs, non-full-size cribs, infant walkers and toddler beds. These products must now meet new robust mandatory standards. The crib standard which went into effect in June of 2011 is of particular significance as it is the strongest crib standard in the world and offers our nation's infants a safe sleep environment, which their parents have a right to expect. For all of these products, third party testing and certification requirements are required. Two new standards will be added every six months.

“With the implementation of “Danny’s Law,” parents now have the assurance that someone has made sure products are safe before we bring them into our homes,” stated Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger, founded by Danny’s parents after his death in an unsafe portable crib. “The new crib and play yard standards, along with other mandatory standards, will vastly improve safety.”

The CPSIA also created a consumer incident database. SaferProducts.gov has been available to the public for over a year and has proven to be an important tool for consumers. As evidence of the databases success, CFA and KID conducted a study of the database that was released in April of 2012.¹ CFA and KID found that the database is being used as intended. Of the 6,080 reports analyzed, almost all (97%) were submitted by consumers, which was the hoped for and expected outcome. The report also documented that 84% of all reports included a serial number or model name or number. While previous concerns had been raised about the lack of information in reports on the database, the findings, which are consistent with those of CPSC, show that most reports have specific information to accurately identify the product involved. The report also noted that manufacturers exercised their right to post additional comments on 53% of reports and that most reports (70%) involved products purchased in the last five years, not older products. The database now includes approximately 10,000 reports.

Ellen Bloom, director of federal policy for Consumers Union, said, “The database is a tremendous resource for consumers. You can search for safety reports about the products you buy, and if you wind up with an unsafe product, the database is there for you to report the problem. The database is a powerful example of how the CPSIA is making a difference in helping consumers protect themselves and their families.”

Following an avalanche of toys and other products recalled for lead paint and content, the CPSIA also required lead to be limited in children’s products. Lead in children’s products is now limited to 100 parts per million, gradually reduced down from no limit at the time of the Act’s passage. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently affirmed the serious toxicity of lead to children by revising their lead guidelines downward. As a result, any child with a blood lead level of more than 5 micrograms of lead would be considered at risk of lead poisoning. “The expectation that lead, a known neurotoxin, should not be in children products now matches reality,” stated Rachel Weintraub. “Lead has no place in children’s products and due to the CPSIA that is now law.”

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The Consumer Federation of America is a nonprofit association of nearly 300 consumer groups that, since 1968, has sought to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education. www.consumerfed.org

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. www.KidsInDanger.org

Consumers Union is the policy and advocacy division of Consumer Reports, an expert, independent, nonprofit organization, whose mission is to work for a fair, safe, and just marketplace for all consumers. www.consumersunion.org.

¹ <http://www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/CPSCDatabase1YearAnniversary3-29-12.pdf>