

SIGHT & HEARING ASSOCIATION RELEASES ANNUAL NOISY TOYS STUDY™

18 out of 20 toys tested are louder than 85 dB, the level set by the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety for mandatory hearing protection.



Saint Paul, MN – While no one wants to be considered a Grinch during the holiday season, Sight & Hearing Association (SHA) gladly takes the responsibility in their 17th Annual Noisy Toys Study™, warning consumers that the loud toys we find on the toys shelves this holiday season, unnecessarily expose children to decibel levels that can be damaging. Of 20 toys tested this year, 18 of them would have the Grinch screaming, “Oh, the noise! Noise! Noise! Noise!” Among the 18 loudest toys, four screamed above 100 decibels (dB), which can damage hearing in

less than 15 minutes. Shockingly, the loudest toy tested this year is among the popular Doc McStuffins toy line, a *Rockin’ Doc Sing-Along Boombox* that peaks at 106.4 dB, when placed at a child’s ear. Doc needs to stop rockin’ and start prescribing musician earplugs for this bombastic Boombox! At press time, Disney/eKids had not responded to SHA’s concern about the noise level of this toy intended for children 3-years-old and up.

With sound level meter in hand, SHA shops for and selects toys that sound too loud for consumers and occasionally they will find a few that pass the test. Among the toys selected this year, SHA identified two that are ear-friendly: *Pull Apart & Talkin’ Olaf* from Disney’s Frozen toy line and a remade vintage toy from the 1960’s, *Two Tune TV™*, both measure under 85 dB. According to the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH), exposure to noise levels above 85 dB for no more than eight hours is the federal threshold for hearing protection. SHA reminds consumers that hearing loss is cumulative and it typically does not occur from one event; it gradually develops over time as we age and it is critical we protect young children's hearing. If you own a smartphone, any consumer can download a sound level meter application that measures the sound level of a toy. SHA suggests, “If you don’t own a smartphone, your ears will do just fine. The rule of thumb is, if a toy sounds too loud to you, it is too loud.”

Toys are required to meet the acoustic standard set by the American Society of Testing and Materials, which states that the sound-pressure level produced by toys shall not exceed 85 dB at 50 cm from the surface of the toy. “What is interesting about this standard is that 50 cm is longer than the average arm length of an adult. We test toys based on how a child would play with a toy, not how an adult would play with it. If you watch a child playing with a noise-producing toy, you will see them hold it close to their face, next to their ears or closer than arms length and arms length for a child is approximately 10 inches (25 cm)”, explains Kathy Webb, Executive Director of SHA.

Webb recommends you “Test a toy before you buy it. It’s okay to push buttons and rattle toys as you walk through the toy aisle and if a toy is too loud for you, it will be too loud for your child. Look for toys that have volume controls and if you must buy a noisy toy this holiday season, or your child receives a noisy toy as a gift, you can place clear packing tape over the speaker which will reduce the sound level enough to make the toy ear-safe.” A study by the University of Minnesota/Department of Otolaryngology confirmed that covering the speaker(s) of noise-producing toys with tape or glue will significantly reduce the noise level of a toy, making it safer for children.

Founded in 1939, Minnesota-based Sight & Hearing Association is dedicated to enabling lifetime learning by identifying preventable loss of vision and hearing. For more information or if consumers have a noisy toy to report, contact SHA at kwebb@sightandhearing.org , the Consumer Product Safety Commission at (800) 638-2772 or www.saferproducts.gov .

Sight & Hearing Association's Noisy Toys List© 2014

TOY	MANUFACTURER	AGE GROUP	TYPE OF TOY	dB(A) 0 inches	dB(A) 10 inches
Doc McStuffins: Rockin' Doc Sing-Along Boombox	Disney/eKids	3y+	Hand-held	106.4	84.8
Laugh & Learn® Puppy's Piano	Fisher – Price	6 – 36 m	Hand-held	104.4	82.6
Dora and Friends: Play It 2 Ways Guitar	Fisher – Price	3y+	Hand-held	104.1	82.2
Transformers® Rescue Bots: Heatwave the Rescue Dinobot®	Playskool Heroes™ / Hasbro	3 – 7y	Floor & Tabletop	101.9	81.6
Toughest Minis Emergency Service Unit	Hasbro/Tonka	3y+	Floor	99.3	80.8
Street Creeper™ Crawling Action!	Hot Wheels	3y+	Floor	99.0	80.4
Move & Zoom Racer	Vtech®	6 – 36m	Hand-held & Floor	98.6	79.3
FurReal Friends: Baby Cuddles – My Giggly Monkey™	Hasbro	4y+	Hand-held	96.9	76.7
Simon Swipe™	Hasbro Gaming®	8y+	Hand-held & Tabletop	96.0	76.5
Spin & Learn Color Flashlight™	Vtech®	1 – 3y	Hand-held	95.1	75.3
Marvel Guardians of the Galaxy: Big Blastin' Rocket Raccoon	Hasbro	4y+	Hand-held & Tabletop	95.1	75.7
123 Sesame Street®: Lullaby & Good Night Elmo	Hasbro/Playskool	18m – 4y	Hand-held	94.9	73.6
Chat & Count Smart Phone	Leap Frog®	18m+	Hand-held	88.8	75.4
Ion Orbiter	Fisher – Price	3 – 8y	Hand-held	88.6	75.7
CAT® Rumbling Big Builder Skid Steer	Caterpillar/Toy State	3y+	Floor	88.4	75.2
Sofia the First: Wave to Me Magic Wand	Disney/ VTech®	2 – 5 y	Hand-held	87.2	74.2
Planes Fire & Rescue: Smokejumpers Team Blackout	Disney/ Mattel	3y+	Hand-held & Floor	87.1	74.7
Nickelodeon Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Stretch 'N' Shout Raphael	Playmates Toys	4y+	Hand-held	86.1	73.3
Frozen: Pull Apart & Talkin' Olaf	Disney / Just Play	3y+	Hand-held	84.7	70.0
Two Tune TV™	Fisher – Price	1y+	Hand-held & Tabletop	83.1	68.2

Decibel (dB) level measurements taken with a hand-held digital sound level meter (Digital Instruments, model SL-814), calibrated to manufacturer's specifications. A-weighted scale, set at a slow response time capturing the maximum sound level. 0 inches equals the child's ear to the toy. 10 inches equals a child's arm length away from the toy.



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