

Taking Requests



CECILIA HENDERSON asks Santa to bring her a doll for Christmas.



BRANDY BURTON AND JENNA ALLEN are two little girls who are ready for Christmas and they talk with Santa Claus

Be Wise When Buying Toys

The twinkle in Santa's eye will dim in a wink if children are unnecessarily injured this Yuletide by a careless selection of toys.

The N.C. Society of Ophthalmology, reminds giftbearing adults that special concern should be given to toys which may pose hazardous to young eyes.

There were more than 7,000 toy-related eye injuries to children under 15 years of age last year, said the Society's president, Dr. M. Bruce Shields. Dr. Shields, a member of the staff at Duke Eye Center, is also medical advisor to the North Carolina Affiliate of the National Society to Prevent Blindness.

"Nearly one-third of youngsters' eye-related injuries can be attributed to BB guns, bows and arrows, darts and similar projectile devices," said Dr. Shields. Other eye injuries are caused by toys many people would consider safe, such as battery operated playthings and building sets.

"The main thing to keep in mind when selecting a toy," said Dr. Shields, "is the age of the child and his or her level of maturity."

Up to age five, the ophthalmologist said, adults should beware of toys that can be broken easily or have sharp edges. That includes toys that cut-scissors, knives, and miniature saws.

It's wise not to give in to a five or six year old who asks for a shooting toy with ammunition of any type—whether ping pong balls, corks, or darts—and certainly not BBs said the medical doctor.

Dr. Shields suggested parental guidance and supervision if giving a chemistry set to a youngster between seven and 12 years of age. Air rifles, dart and arrow games are also potentially hazardous for this age group. Older children requesting power tools should also receive eye goggles with industrial strength lenses, he said.

Flying splinters of wood are one of the most frequent eye tormentors associated with power tools. But it's blows to the eye that are of even more concern, because they happen to more youngsters.

"Usually such eye injuries are minor and temporary," said Dr. Shields. "However, anyone

struck in the eye who complains of blurred vision, pain or spots before the eyes should get immediate attention," he said. "Even one eye injury to one child is too many," concluded

the ophthalmologist.

The N.C. Society of Ophthalmology is a group of more than 250 medical doctors from across the state specializing in eye care.

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