

Noisy Toys

As you are reading this column, many children will be playing with their new toys they received for Christmas. Toys are made to attract children and one of the features children find attractive is the noise a toy makes. The loudness of the bells, whistles, buzzes, and clangs has always been a top-selling feature of many toys.

But, what are all these noises doing to the hearing of a child? It is true that Canada has a limit to the sound level for any toy that is sold. It cannot exceed 100 decibels at arm's length. Unfortunately, many children don't always play with their toys at arm's length. They hold them up to their ears and faces. They cuddle them. When you realize that 100 decibels is similar to the noise produced by a chainsaw or a rock concert, you can imagine the potential damage this can do to your children's hearing.

Research has shown that children are especially vulnerable to hearing loss from loud noises. This is because they have smaller ear canals which allows the noise to hit the eardrums sooner and with more impact.

Unfortunately, the packaging on toys does not indicate the noise or decibel level of the toy. However, if you have to raise your voice above the noise level of a toy to be heard, then the noise is too loud and could cause permanent damage to your child's hearing.

In May, the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association reported that more young people are being diagnosed with hearing loss, often due to prolonged and increased exposure to unsafe noises, including noisy toys. Noise - induced hearing loss is permanent but it is also preventable. Parents, please help protect your children's hearing by limiting the amount of time they spend playing with noisy toys, by educating them on how to play with the toys properly, and when purchasing toys in the future, consider their noise levels.

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association-Happy Valley-Goose Bay Branch wishes everyone a safe and happy New Year.

Protect your hearing!