

the toy he thinks he wants," she said. "Unfortunately, that's almost impossible. That's why it's so important to be informed before you go shopping and to read the information on the boxes once you're in the store."

And that's why it's so important that toys be checked out as soon as shoppers get them home.

"IF THE toy requires assembly, check to be sure all the parts are there. Then if you have to make an exchange, you can do so while the stores still have that toy in stock," Woodworth said.

Once boxes are opened on Christmas Day, throw them away, along with the wrappings. Avoid boxes

with such potential hazards as protruding staples.

And once the toys are in the hands of their new owners, check them periodically for safety.

"Maintenance is as important as toy selection," said Woodworth. "Check the toy box regularly for breakage and potential hazards. Wooden toys that may have developed splinters should be sanded smooth. Examine outdoor toys for rust and weak spots. When making repairs, be sure to use non-toxic parts and non-flammable materials."

"Store toys on a shelf or in a toy box that can be easily opened from within," she advised. "And teach children to put their toys away after play to prevent falls or injuries."



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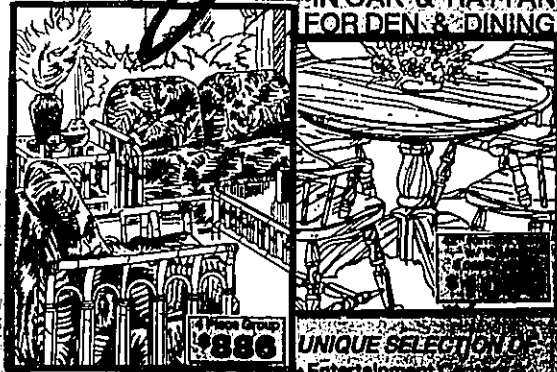
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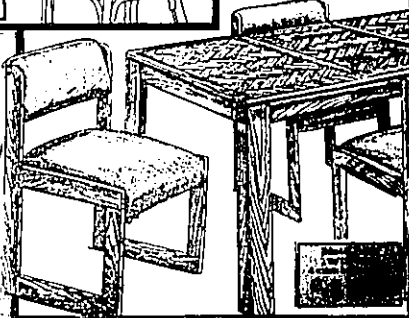
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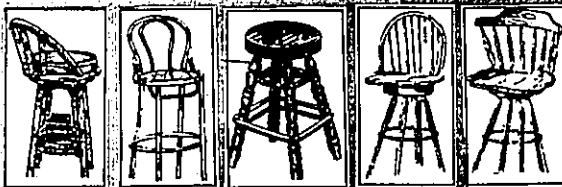
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