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## Audiologists Warn of Noisy Toy Dangers

### *Experts Say Awareness is Key to Preventing Hearing Damage in Children*

OTTAWA (October 2, 2006) During a press conference on Parliament Hill today, the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA) in partnership with the Elks of Canada and Royal Purple of Canada, reminded parents of the potential dangers of noisy toys to their children's hearing.

In anticipation of the holiday shopping season, CASLPA and the Elks and Royal Purple advise parents to be cautious when contemplating purchasing noisy toys for their children. These toys have the potential to harm hearing if held too closely to the ears and face, and this can lead to serious communication and learning difficulties in the future. One in ten Canadians has as a speech, language, or hearing problem which hinders their capacity to communicate.

"It is essential for parents to know that noisy toys have the potential to harm their children's hearing if they are not played with as intended," said Chantal Lalonde, Manager of Audiology and Supportive Personnel at CASLPA "and more importantly, that hearing damage due to noise is preventable through awareness."

Audiologists recommend that parents and consumers consider the following safety tips when buying toys:

- Choose toys with an on/off button.
- Choose toys with a volume control.
- Limit playtime with noisy toys.
- Listen to the toy before making a purchase.
- Teach children the proper way to play with their toys. Toys should be played with at arm's length.
- Purchase quiet toys such as books that target language and literacy skills.

“As a rule of thumb,” said Lalonde, “if you have to raise your voice above the noise level of a toy to be heard, than the noise is too loud and could be causing damage to your child’s hearing.”

Elks President Bill Ward says that preventable hearing and communication issues have a serious impact on Canadian adults and youth, and that is why his organization is so heavily involved in spreading awareness related to hearing. Living in the global economy that exists today, Ward says it is important for parents and caregivers to be especially vigilant. For example, if a toy is purchased on the internet or while abroad, there is a possibility that it could originate from a country that does not have as stringent safety regulations as Canada does.

“The Elks and Royal Purple are proud to be a part of this important prevention initiative with CASLPA,” says Ward, “because being an informed consumer and making informed choices can help protect your child’s hearing for life.”

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Audiologists have a minimum of a Master's degree and are professionals who assess the extent of hearing loss, balance and related disorders and recommend appropriate treatment. Audiologists also work with adults and children who need aural rehabilitation, such as auditory training and speech reading, and educate consumers and professionals on the prevention of hearing loss.

With more than 5,000 members, **CASLPA** is the only national body that supports and represents the professional needs of speech-language pathologists, audiologists and supportive personnel inclusively within one organization. Through this support, CASLPA champions the needs of people with communications disorders. Visit CASLPA at [www.caslpa.ca](http://www.caslpa.ca)

**The Elks of Canada** are the largest, all-Canadian, fraternal and service organization with more than 20,000 Elks and Royal Purple members in Lodges coast to coast. The National Charity of the Organization, The Elks and Royal Purple Fund For Children, has provided millions of dollars to combat speech, hearing and communication disorders in children. The Fund supports literacy, stuttering and auditory rehabilitation programs, and many other initiatives in all regions of the country. Visit the Elks Website at: [www.elks-canada.org](http://www.elks-canada.org).

**For more information about noisy toys prevention, please contact:**

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- **John Kennedy, Elks of Canada and Royal Purple of Canada** at 1-888-843-3557.