

**Consumer Federation of America * Consumers Union * Kids in Danger *
U.S. Public Interest Research Group**

For Immediate Release:

May 25, 2010

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**U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Issues Mandatory Standard for Baby
Bath Seat:
Strengthens Standard but Falls Short of a Ban
First Standard Issued as Required by CPSIA- Danny Keysar Provision**

Washington, D.C.—Consumer groups applauded the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for issuing a mandatory safety standard for baby bath seats. While the groups have long urged a ban on these products, the mandatory standards are a step in the right direction for addressing some of the design shortcomings that have contributed to many infant drownings.

Baby bath seats are consumer products intended to assist in bathing infants by holding the infant in a sitting position in full-size bathtubs or sinks.

While the new mandatory standard completed last week for baby bath seats strengthens the existing voluntary standard by including more stringent stability requirements to prevent tip-overs, smaller leg openings to prevent babies from slipping through the leg openings and a larger, permanent warning label, consumer groups remain concerned that baby bath seats can still pose inherent risks and provide a false perception of safety that these products mistakenly instill in the parents and caregivers who use them.

“The Commission took an important step in issuing a strong mandatory standard for baby bath seats as required by the CPSIA,” stated Rachel Weintraub, Director of Product Safety for Consumer Federation of America. “CFA has been working to ban baby bath seats and educate consumers about the risks they pose to babies for over 10 years. We are gratified that the Commission took this important step to eliminate bath seat designs currently on the market that have proven to be unsafe.”

The hazards posed by baby bath seats and the need for CPSC action regarding these products has been a priority for consumer advocates for many years. In 2000, Consumer Federation of America, Kids in Danger, and other consumer organizations petitioned CPSC to ban baby bath seats due to the hazards they pose to infants. CPSC denied the ban but moved forward on a rulemaking that ultimately stalled. CPSC deferred to an ASTM voluntary standard for baby bath seats that inadequately addressed hazards posed by this product.

The biggest hazard posed by baby bath seats is the false sense of security they give parents. Parents assume that they can use more water or leave the bathroom, even briefly, while their child is bathing.

But according to data from CPSC, from 1983 through November 2009, there were 174 reported deaths involving bath seats and 300 reported non-fatal bath seat incidents. Most incidents occurred while the baby was left unattended, albeit momentarily.

“We look forward to working with the Commission to educate consumers about safely bathing infants and about the inherent risks posed by the use of baby bath seats. Together we hope to assess how this mandatory standard reduces the hazards posed by these products,” stated Ami Gadhia, Policy Counsel with Consumers Union. “We continue to be concerned about the products already in people’s homes and the risk they pose to babies.”

The bath seat standard is the first mandatory standard published by CPSC under the requirements of the *Danny Keysar Child Product Safety Notification Act* in the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008.

“Danny Keysar died in an unsafe, untested portable crib,” stated Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger, founded by Danny’s parents. “These new standards and the accompanying testing and certification requirements will prevent other tragedies in nursery products. While we believe that bath seats are inherently dangerous and recommend against their use, we believe the CPSC attempted to make the product as safe as possible, short of a ban. We look forward to the remainder of the required mandatory standards and believe they will help keep infants and toddlers safe.”

The next standard to be published, the Infant Walker Standard, will be voted on by the commission on Wednesday of this week.

Consumer groups remind caregivers that no baby bath seat currently on the market or in use meets the new standards and renew their warning to parents and caregivers that they should always keep a baby within arm’s reach while bathing them in a bathtub or any bath product. Leaving a baby unattended for a mere few seconds can lead to injury or death – even in a small amount of water.

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