



Use this checklist before you place a production order. It covers the eight things that most often turn a smooth first run into a delayed or over-budget one — the brief, the test package, tooling, sample approval, and the documents you should receive with the goods.

COUNTRIES SHIPPED DDP

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2 Test Package by Destination Market

The same product needs different testing depending on where you sell it

MARKET	STANDARD TO TEST AGAINST	WHAT ELSE IS REQUIRED
United States	ASTM F963 (mechanical, flammability, heavy metals) plus CPSIA for lead and phthalates	A Children's Product Certificate (CPC) based on third-party testing at an accredited lab
European Union	EN71-1 mechanical, EN71-2 flammability, EN71-3 migration of 19 elements, plus REACH	CE marking and a technical file held for 10 years
United Kingdom	EN71 remains the designated standard	UKCA marking applies; CE marking continues to be accepted for most products
Australia / New Zealand	AS/NZS ISO 8124	Separate mandatory requirements apply to products for children up to 36 months
Canada	Toys Regulations (SOR/2011-17) under the CCPSA	Bilingual English and French labelling
Other markets	ISO 8124 is widely accepted where no local standard exists	Confirm with your importer before production, not after

Standards and marking rules change. Confirm the current requirement for your destination with your test lab before the production run starts — the cost of retesting a shipped batch is far higher than the cost of asking.

3 MOQ & Tooling — The Five Questions to Settle First

Tooling is the line item that surprises first-time buyers most

Does your design need a new mould?

Plastic and electronic parts usually do. Wooden, fabric and laser-cut parts usually do not. Ask which category your product falls into before you accept a tooling charge.

Who owns the tooling afterwards?

Ask for the tooling cost as a separate line item, and ask who owns the mould. If the answer is not "you", negotiate it before you pay for it.

Is sampling cost credited back?

Many factories credit sample charges against the bulk order once it is placed — but only if you ask. Get it in writing in the quote.

Is the MOQ per design or per order?

This matters if you plan a range. 300 units per design is a typical low-MOQ floor for custom work; mass-market factories often quote 2,000–5,000.

What moves the unit price?

Material grade, colour count, print or engraving method, packaging format, and how much hand assembly the design needs. Know which levers you are pulling.

What is the change-control process?

Ask in writing: what happens if a component is unavailable mid-run? A factory with a written approval step will tell you. One without will improvise.

4 Sample Approval — What to Verify Before You Release Production

Once bulk starts, changes cost real money. Check all seven on the physical sample.

- ☐ **Dimensions against your drawing**
Check the tolerances that actually matter — the ones that affect fit, function or the safety test. Ignore the rest.
- ☐ **Colour against your master**
Assess under daylight, not office lighting. Fluorescent light makes two different colours look identical.
- ☐ **Edges and corners for the target age grade**
Radius verified, no sharp points, no splintering on wooden parts. This is the most commonly failed mechanical check.
- ☐ **Small-parts cylinder test at the target age grade**
Any detachable part must not fit the cylinder for products under three. Test it yourself, do not assume.
- ☐ **Assembly fit and any moving parts**
Mating parts, hinges, gears, magnets. Check that magnet encapsulation is complete — this is an explicit failure point in EN71-1.
- ☐ **Drop test from the height the standard specifies**
Test the assembled product in its final form, at the height your age band requires.
- ☐ **Packaging mock-up with your artwork**
In the final material, at final size. Packaging errors are found here or at the port — nowhere in between.

5 What Should Ship With Your Order

Ask for this list by name in your purchase order

DOCUMENT	WHY YOU NEED IT
Test reports for your destination market	Customs clearance, marketplace compliance, and retailer onboarding all ask for these
Children's Product Certificate	Legally required for children's products sold in the United States
Material traceability records	Insurance and recall preparedness — you cannot reconstruct them later
Batch QC summary	A one-page record of what was inspected on your run, and the result
Pre-shipment inspection report	Your formal sign-off point, before the goods leave the factory
Packing list and commercial invoice	Required for customs clearance at both ends
Certificate of origin	Determines duty rates and trade-agreement eligibility

6 Red Flags in a Quote or a Sample

Any one of these is worth a direct question. Two or more is worth a second supplier.

A price well below your material cost

Someone is cutting material, testing, or both. Ask which material grade the quote assumes.

No factory address — only an office

Ask for the production site address and a video call on the floor. A trading company will route you back to a salesperson.

No written spec sheet before the quote

A quote without a spec cannot be compared to another quote, and cannot be enforced later.

Refusal of a third-party inspection

Pre-shipment inspection by SGS, TUV or Intertek is routine. Refusing it is not.

Components changed without written notice

Ask explicitly: will anything change between my approved sample and the bulk run, and who approves it?

The test lab is unnamed

Reports must come from an accredited lab and be traceable to your production batch — not a generic certificate from an unknown source.

Planning your first educational toy production run?

Send us your brief — a sketch, a spec sheet, or a curriculum requirement — and we will come back with a feasibility assessment, a material recommendation and a line-item quote.

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