



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## Senator Hoylman Sounds Alarm On Mattel's Suspect Advertising Claims

BRAD HOYLMAN December 18, 2013

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, CONSUMER PROTECTION**

New York, NY—Following dubious claims about the educational and developmental benefits of New York-based Fisher-Price's Apptivity products, New York State Senator Brad Hoylman sent a letter today to parent company Mattel, calling on the toy manufacturer to review the product line and cease promoting passive screen use by infants and toddlers.

Fisher-Price's Apptivity products include, among others, a seat for infants designed to hold an iPad device (click here for image: [http://www.fisherprice.com/en\\_US/brands/babygear/products/78030](http://www.fisherprice.com/en_US/brands/babygear/products/78030)). These products contravene guidelines established by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) stating that infants and children under age two years should not be exposed to screen devices.

Senator Hoylman (D, WFP – Manhattan) said: "As the ranking member of the New York State Senate Consumer Protection Committee and parent of a three-year old, I'm deeply concerned that certain advertising claims made by Mattel in connection with their Apptivity product line could violate state laws on false advertising and deceptive business practices. Parents should not be duped this holiday season into purchasing products that experts say are detrimental to their children's development. I'm urging Mattel and Fisher-Price to review all Apptivity products immediately and stop making any unfounded claims that these

products promote educational and developmental benefits for infants and toddlers.”

You can read the full copy of the letter from Senator Hoylman below:

December 18, 2013

Mr. Bryan Stockton

Chief Executive Officer

Mattel, Inc.

333 Continental Boulevard

El Segundo, CA 90245-5012

Dear Mr. Stockton:

I am writing to you in my capacity as the ranking member of the New York State Senate Consumer Protection Committee to express my concern about Fisher-Price’s Apptivity product line and the advertising claims made in connection with these products.

Fisher-Price’s Apptivity products include, among others, a seat for infants designed to hold an iPad device which the company claims will “engage baby” and “help develop eye-tracking skills”; a “gym” for infants that connects to iPhone or iPod Touch devices which the company claims “stimulate[s] visual development”; and a stuffed puppy and monkey for infants and toddlers that attaches to an iPhone or iPod Touch device which the company claims promotes “thinking and problem solving.”

Fisher-Price’s claims of educational and developmental benefits for the Apptivity products seem dubious because the products promote passive screen use by infants and toddlers. This contravenes guidelines established by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the leading professional organization for primary care pediatricians and pediatric medical sub-

specialists. The guidelines state that infants and children under age two years should not be exposed to screen devices and advise parents to keep Internet-connected devices out of children's bedrooms.[1] A child's brain develops rapidly during the first years, and young children learn best by interacting with people, not screens, according to the AAP. Studies have shown that excessive media use can lead to attention problems, school difficulties, sleep and eating disorders, and obesity.

As the world's largest toy manufacturer, Mattel, Inc. has an important responsibility not to mislead parents of small children about the educational and developmental benefits of the company's products and those of its New York-based subsidiary, Fisher-Price. I am concerned that certain advertising claims made by Mattel in connection with the Apptivity product line could violate state laws on false advertising and deceptive business practices (N.Y. Gen. Bus. Laws §§ 349 & 350). I strongly urge Mattel to review the entire Apptivity product line and immediately cease from making any unfounded claims that these products promote educational and developmental benefits for infants and toddlers.

Sincerely,

Brad Hoylman

State Senator

27th District

cc: The Honorable Eric Schneiderman, NYS Attorney General

The Honorable Lee Zeldin, Chair, NYS Senate Consumer Protection Committee

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[1] See: "Children, Adolescents, and the Media," Pediatrics, October 28, 2013.