

News

Saving the Lives of Children, One Child at a Time

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In 1970, the United States Congress enacted the Poison Prevention Packaging Act (PPPA) to protect small children from accidental poisonings. Enforcement of the Act falls under the responsibility of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), which created a test protocol to facilitate compliance with the PPPA. This protocol is also used by the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure child-resistance for products under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Similar test protocols are also found in International Standard ISO 8317 and British/European Norms BS EN 862 and 14375.

In July 2006, IAS received an application from an independent testing facility with locations in California and Utah called Child Related Research, Inc. (CRR). The company was interested in seeking accreditation as a testing laboratory under ISO/IEC Standard 17025, General Criteria for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories. CRR wanted to demonstrate the capabilities of its highly trained staff testers and test managers to carry out testing to child-resistant packaging standards. Over the next few months, a series of on-site assessments were conducted by IAS to evaluate CRR's quality management system, and to observe actual testing of both child and adult subjects at test locations in California and Utah. These assessments were conducted by an IAS assessment team led by IAS Senior Policy Advisor Dave Nelson with the assistance of IAS Accreditation Officer Prasanth Ramakrishnan. Nelson is a registered civil engineer with masters and doctorate credentials in educational psychology as well as an internationally recognized expert in professional assessments. Ramakrishnan is a seasoned accreditation officer, having conducted numerous assessments of testing laboratories and inspection agencies. He holds masters degrees in industrial and mechanical engineering.

Since most accidental poisonings occur in the home, CRR testers try to recreate the home environment while conducting testing on children. Typically, children are tested at their preschool or daycare center in a room with which they are familiar. Children usually sit on the floor while attempting to open a package. During the testing, children are seated on the floor in front of the tester so the methods they use to open packages can be observed. Before the testing, CRR staff talk to the children to make them feel comfortable and at ease. Testers are careful to not encourage or discourage children

with facial expressions or comments, but remain unbiased observers. When a child is able to open a package, the tester will record his/her observations with a detailed description of the method the child used to access the package.

While it is critical that packaging be child-resistant, it is also important that it can be opened by seniors. The test protocol also calls for testing senior adults, which is usually carried out in senior centers or in an adult's home. Senior adults often have prejudices against child-resistant packaging and it is the responsibility of the tester to assure them that the test is on the package, not the adult. After opening the package, the adult is encouraged to give their opinion and any suggestions for improvement of the design.

During the assessment process, CRR demonstrated that its testing is conducted strictly within the parameters of the test protocols, and procedures are precisely followed. The company has implemented standard operating procedures and trained its staff to ensure conformance with the standards. Recognition of CRR's competence resulted in IAS awarding accreditation in June 2007. The [accreditation certificate](#) is now posted on the IAS website.

Child Related Research, Inc., provides testing for some of the largest pharmaceutical and household chemical companies in the United States. Through its efforts and the efforts of IAS, we are truly people helping people build a safer world.