

Toys and Activities

To Help Children Grow, Develop and Learn



Children learn through play, so... playing with your child is more important than toys or structured activities.

If you think of the types of activities your children enjoy, you can choose good toys that appeal to them. Good toys are not necessarily expensive, and there are hundreds from which to choose.

Spend wisely and always be aware of the safety features of toys, such as the risk of choking on small pieces.

Select toys that will foster different types of learning in your child: hands-on toys, books, recordings, art materials, active play equipment and pretend play objects. Art and construction activities may require closer supervision. Match toys to the child's ability and age and always be alert to potential dangers.

To help your children get the most from their toys, arrange them on low, open shelves so they are easy for children to locate, reach and return.

Birth to 3 Months

- Rattles (at least 1 5/8" across); large rings, squeeze or sucking toys; visually stimulating toys (black and white, bright and contrasting colors), texture toys, stuffed animals
- Lullabies, nursery rhymes, poems
- Bright pictures of faces hung where baby can see them; cardboard or vinyl books with black & white or bright colors
- Wrist and ankle rattles
- Brightly patterned crib sheet
- Mobiles hanging from the ceiling or across the crib

* Crib mobiles must be attached securely to the side rails and out of reach.

* Stuffed animals should have no parts that can be pulled off: ribbons, buttons, eyes, noses, etc.



4 to 6 Months

- Soft doll, texture ball, socks with bright designs; brightly colored teething balls
- Toys that make noise when batted, squeezed or mouthed; bells with handle, chime balls
- Cloth or soft vinyl books with bright pictures
- Unbreakable mirror; photo album with peoples' faces cut out from magazines
- Finger play, simple songs, peek-a-boo, so-o-big, waving bye-bye, clap hands, teaching opposites (open-close; on-off; full-empty)

* Crib gyms must be removed as soon as baby can get up on all fours, or when baby starts to sit, to avoid entanglement

* Stuffed animals should have no parts that can be pulled off: ribbons, buttons, eyes, noses, etc.

7 to 12 Months

- Rag and cloth dolls, stuffed animals (remove all ribbons), hand puppets
 - Container for large beads, blocks, balls
 - Nesting toys or plastic containers, rings on a cone, play gym, activity boxes in crib or tub
 - Board books to read, old magazines to touch or tear, vinyl books for the bathtub, books about faces and children
 - Recordings of voices, animal sounds, music, musical instruments (xylophone or toy piano)
 - Wooden blocks, large soft blocks,, crawl through tunnels, climb over pillows, busy boxes, stacking cubes
 - Water toys that float
 - Games like peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake, nursery rhymes, finger play, jack-in-the-box
- * When baby can stand, remove all objects large enough to be used as a step out of the crib

1 to 1½ Years

- Busy box or music box, pull and push toys (grocery carts), ride on toys for rocking
- Puzzles (2-6 pieces with knobs)
- Picture books/recordings with songs, rhymes, simple stories, pictures of familiar faces
- Wide watercolor markers, non-toxic fat crayons, large paper—all used while supervised
- Geometric or cardboard blocks
- Wooden or plastic people and animals like garages, farms, doll houses, etc.
- Pounding bench
- Sand and water play: plastic measuring cups, sifters, boats, shovels, pails and containers, washable doll, edible play dough, bubbles
- Large cardboard box without a lid to crawl in and out of
- Kitchen cupboard of safe pots, pans, lids and utensils

1½ to 2 Years

- Sorting box, holes with pegs, puzzles; large spools with beads to string
- Books with large colorful illustrations, short stories, imitative games
- Soft dough, clay, plastic cookie cutters, bells, drums
- Shopping cart, wagon, steerable riding toy, toy telephone, washable doll, indoor slides, mini sandbox; small broom, sponge, toy camera, pots and pans
- Dolls or busy boxes with zippers, buttons, snaps, etc.



2 to 3 Years

- Wood puzzles with 4-20 pieces, color forms, bubbles, "Mr. Potato Head" with body and face parts
- Pegboard, sewing cards, stacking toys, picture lotto, dominoes, toddler kitchen set, cars, trucks, road signs, flip-flop alphabet books
- Picture/story books, poems about familiar things, pop-up and talking picture books
- Classical, folk, children's music; sound boxes (cans/boxes with unremovable lids, filled with uncooked rice, pasta, beans, etc.)
- Child safe or tempera paint, 1/2" brushes, blunt scissors, non-toxic white glue, games that use tongs ("Bed Bugs" or Fleas on Freddy")
- Large blocks, duplos
- Wooden or plastic train set
- Texture and sound matching games, color & shape matching and sorting activities
- Wagon, wheelbarrow, large rubber ball, riding toy, tricycle, scooter, hippity-hop
- Dress-up clothes for pretend play, hats, shoes, shirts; hand puppet, tea set
- Washable doll with a few clothes, doll bed
- Wind up toys

3 to 5 Years

- Puzzles with more pieces, simple card and board games, ABC songs, counting games
- Smaller beads, parquetry blocks, objects to sort
- Flannel board with pictures, letters; games ("Candyland"), memory games
- More detailed story books, simple science books
- Book and CD/tape sets, children's music, puppets
- Potter's clay, easel, smaller paintbrushes, thick crayons, chalk, chalk board, paste, tape and dispenser, collage materials
- Construction set with smaller pieces; ring toss, beanbags
- Woodworking bench, hammer and nails, sandpaper
- Sand and water play, egg beater, muffin tin, vehicles (cars and boats)
- Xylophone, maracas, tambourine, whistles, horns
- Roller skates, plastic bat and balls, balance board, jungle gym
- Child sized stove or sink, toy telephone, play food, cardboard cartons, more pretend dress-up clothes, doll carriages and accessories