



WHY TOYS??

Toys are the tools a child uses, as through his play, he gains mastery of himself and his environment. Toys are important at every age level, though they fill different functions at various ages. Throughout the childhood years, toys stimulate the social, physical, personality, and intellectual development of the child.

Social Development

- help children progress from solitary to cooperative play
- help children learn to share with others

Physical Development

- encourage the development and coordination of small muscles
- foster the development and control of the large muscles

Personality Development

- encourage maturity of behavior
- foster the uniqueness of each child

Intellectual Development

- expand the child's knowledge of the physical properties of the world
- foster creative thinking
- increase vocabulary

Remember, caring parents are the greatest contribution to a child's learning. the most important "toy" in the life of your child, the "toy" he likes to play with more than any other ... that will influence him more than any other is that unique flesh and blood toy ... YOU!



FIVE CHECKPOINTS FOR BUYING TOYS

1. Safe; no sharp edges, points or toxic paints.
2. Durable: determine price per play hour — it pays to buy quality in the long run.
3. Open-ended; can be used in many ways.
4. Span several stages of child's growth; at least one year.
5. Suitable to age and stage of child.

BIRTH TO THREE YEARS

Sensori-motor Period

The child learns through the five senses and through motor skills:

Large muscle — crawling, walking, climbing and small muscle — grasping and hand-eye co-ordination

Choose toys that:

- visually stimulate with bright, true colors
- encourage touching with soft and unusual textures
- heighten hearing awareness without damaging
- encourage small muscle development

Suggestions: Mother and Father, bright objects and pictures hung in child's view, squeak toys, sturdy rattles, smooth non-breakable objects to chew on, nesting and stacking toys, soft cuddly dolls or animals with washer locked eyes, bath toys, simple puzzles, thick paged books.

Avoid: toxic heavy breakable toys, sharp edges, small parts on toys which might be swallowed or put into eyes or ears.

THREE TO FIVE YEARS

Pre-academic Period

The child develops pre-math and pre-reading skills, explores dramatic play, increases language development, refines their sensory perception, continues large and small muscle development.

Choose toys that encourage:

- visual discrimination of shapes and pictures
- hand-eye co-ordination
- concrete pre-math experiences
- self-expression in dramatic and creative play
- sequencing as a pre-math and pre-reading skill
- recognition of spatial relationships

Suggestions: push-in pegboards, hand puppets and finger puppets, dominoes, matching games, lotto, paper dolls, doll houses and furniture, simple construction sets and science experiments, and simple games which teach colors, shapes and relationships.

Avoid: toys which are too heavy for a child's strength, sharp or cutting toys, poorly made toys which come apart, break or splinter.

FIVE TO EIGHT YEARS

Academic period

The child sets tasks for himself and follows through, enjoys playing by himself as well as with others, puts together earlier experiences, thinks concretely.

Choose toys that encourage:

- logical and alternative ways of thinking
- basic reading skills
- development of mathematical concepts and functions
- imaginative and creative play
- curiosity about the world around us

Suggestions: games which can be played competitively and non-competitively, building blocks and constructions sets, doll houses, musical instruments, puppets, reading, spelling, math, science and logic-related games and activities, activity books.

Avoid: Non-approved electrical toys, anything too large or complicated for a child's strength, sharp edged tools.

EIGHT TO ADULT

Challenge! Learning continues all through life.

Choose toys and games to continue the stimulation of all earlier learning activities — reading, math and logic, and communication. Challenging games and puzzles provide lasting entertainment for the whole family.

Suggestions: hobby materials, construction building sets, strategy games, math and science related activities, more difficult puzzles and word games.

Parent supervision is advised for any chemical or building toy where the child's judgement or abilities may be in question.

