



So Many Toys! Which Do I Choose?

Choose traditional toys over electronic ones

Traditional non-electronic toys are better than fancy electronic toys for supporting play and engagement. The best toys are the ones that do nothing on their own because they need you in order to come alive. “Smart” toys end up stealing the show. Research has shown that parents and their children talk to each other less when playing with electronic toys. Because most toys today make at least some noise, it’s helpful to remove the batteries so that you and your child can focus on the play without the distraction of noisy toys.

Choose developmentally appropriate toys

Take a moment to watch and see how your child plays with toys without giving him any ideas. Is he doing simple cause and effect actions such as pushing a car or crashing a tower? Is he combining two objects together such as putting topping on a toy pizza or parking a car in a garage? Is he acting out familiar actions from his daily life such as pretending to drink from a toy cup or feeding a puppet? Or is he acting out little stories in play such as having a doll take a bath, brush her teeth, and then go to sleep. Choose toys that your child will enjoy at his current stage of development.

Use everyday objects as toys

Sometimes the best toys are objects already in your home. These may include salad spinners, Tupperware containers, empty diaper boxes, socks, and laundry bins. It’s fun to get creative! You can build your child a road for his cars out of masking tape or a house for his toy people out of an empty toilet paper tube.

Have fewer toys available

Having only a few toy options available will encourage your child to play with his toys longer and to be more creative with how he plays with them. Try putting some of your child’s toys in a storage bin, and then switch them out every now and then. Another benefit is that toys coming out of storage will seem new and exciting to your child.