



Toys help amuse children but also help develop growing minds.

# For every age, there's a toy

Shopping for toys can be fun, but nothing is quite as disappointing as spending hours choosing what you think will be the perfect toy only to realize after it's opened that the child is too young or too old to enjoy it.

Playing is more than fun for children. It's valuable time spent developing their imaginations, motor skills and coordination. So playthings must continue to change as a child's mind and body grows.

Children also acquire a sense of how to develop ideas and how to carry them out with hands when they play with toys. Adults

should keep in mind the creative uses toys can generate when they buy them. Toy makers do extensive research on creative abilities at various age levels. Specific age information is prominently displayed on packaging.

A clinical psychologist and member of Fisher-Price's research team, Dr. Paula Abrams-Smith, explains that new toys are tested on the world's toughest critics — kids.

"We observe children at play in a variety of settings, in their homes, in a nursery school, at our headquarters and on field trips," she said. "We also get reactions from mothers. But the final determination of age appropriateness for any individual child rests with the parents."

ABRAMS-SMITH offers this general guide to popular toys for children from the crib to the playpen (birth to age 3) and urges parents to make the most objective judgment possible before choosing playthings for their youngsters.

From birth to 3 months: musical mobiles, crib gyms, balls, rattles, teething, crib activity centers, unbreakable mirrors, squeeze-squeak toys, colorful pictures, happy faces, mobile boxes, huggable and cuddly, soft dolls.

From 3-6 months: soft dolls, stuffed animals, puppets, peek-a-boo games, floating water toys, large snaplock beads, large rattles, large soft blocks with pictures.

From 6-12 months: picture books, simple nesting toys, plastic picture cards, soft rubber balls, records of nursery rhymes or animal sounds, ticking clocks or watches, baby dolls, rubber squeeze toys, flat surface suction toys, single shape sorters.

From 1-2 years: crayons and paper, soft toys with wheels, small wooden blocks, stacking rings, balls, blocks, peg and hole activities, large beads for stringing, clay, bath toys, foot-to-floor vehicles, textured objects, rocking horse, doll carriage, slide, sand and water toys.

ONCE A CHILD reaches the age of 3, the number of toys he or she can safely enjoy expands tremendously. But the Lego Resource Center for Children and Play offers the following guidelines into child development from ages 3-12.

Children from ages 3-5 like to draw, paint, cut out and build as they learn to train hands and fingers. This important creative period in a child's life should be fostered through stimulating toys.

In the 5-7 age group, children play

# that's just right



In choosing toys, consider that children 7 to 12 look for now and greater challenges to keep pace with growing knowledge and abilities. These older children often are very critical of themselves and require a great deal of support and encouragement in their creative activities.

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more with imagination and realism. They become more delectable and their knowledge of the world expands. Their ability to think becomes more developed, and they are aware of what they are doing and what they wish to do. Above all, children in this age group possess a lively imagination.

IN THE years from 7-12, a child will look for new and greater challenges to

keep pace with his or her growing knowledge and range of abilities. These older children often are very critical of themselves and require a great deal of support and encouragement in their creative activities. Respect and acknowledgment of their accomplishments often encourage them to tackle new projects and try new ideas.

Children also enjoy having parents or other adults join them in their play.

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