

How Do I Choose The Best Toy For My Child?

In our electronic world, the importance of authentic, child-powered play sometimes gets lost. Millions of advertising dollars push the flash and glitz of electronic toys that "do it all" while the child is a passive participant. Indeed, many mass-marketed toys come with detailed "stories" that stifle the child's natural imagination and creativity.

How do parents know which toys are best for their children? The best toys are simple and provide opportunities for a child's imagination and creativity to drive the play experience.

A good toy is "20% toy and 80% child's imagination." Here are some suggestions about what to look for when you choose toys. Look for toys that:

- **Provide safe, durable and excellent designs that ensure successful outcomes without frustration.** *The pieces fit together easily and the toy does not break or fall apart during play.*
- **Encourage open-ended experiences instead of defined, specific outcomes.**
A simple baby doll allows the child to create the dialogue rather than a doll programmed with talking phrases.
- **Can be used in a variety of ways at different ages.** *The child can choose how to use the toy in play, can mix toys together to create expanded and new play experiences, can change rules or definitions of games, may be used differently in solitary play and group play.*
- **Engross, intrigue and captivate the child in active, mind-engaged activity.**
The child can play with the same toy for an extended period of time; the toy does not lose its attraction with repetitive play because it provides "fresh" experiences every time it is used
- **Build a sense of mastery, success and personal power.** *Toys that provide active, child-powered, repetitive experience of achievement and success.*
- **Create fun, pleasure, and joy in a safe, non-violent world!**

SOURCES:

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