Choosing Quality Learning Toys and Materials for Young Children

**Quality toys and materials**
- Can be used in multiple ways
- Challenge children to ask questions, develop ideas, and figure out how things work
- Build motor control and strength
- Encourage children to use their imagination
- Allow children to determine the play
- Are not linked to video games, TV, movies, media, or advertising
- Encourage children to move and be active
- Stand the test of time
- Appeal to children at multiple ages and levels
- Encourage use by both boys and girls
- Can be played with alone or with others
- Are beautiful, engaging, and made of a variety of materials
- Connect children with nature and the outdoors

**Toys to avoid…**
- Encourage everyone to play the same way
- Lead children to imitate scripts they see on a TV program, video game, or movie
- Perform special actions for the child instead of encouraging the child to direct the play
- Are primarily cause-and-effect toys
- Encourage children to sit passively and watch screens (TV, computer, movies)
- Use electronics and noise to over stimulate children
- Appeal primarily to a single age level
- Appeal to only boys or only girls
- Isolate children from others
- Promote violence or stereotypes
- Encourage children to become consumers
- Are primarily made of plastic and use only primary colors

Remember to keep it simple. Many of the best learning materials are not found in catalogs.

Reflect on the toys and materials you loved the most as a child. Why did you love them? How did you play with them?