

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

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

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



The more a child can do with a toy, the more likely it is to promote learning

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