

Dr. Toy's Tips on Selecting Toys and Other Children's Products©

By

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Some basic questions to ask yourself before you purchase a toy or any children's product:

1. Is the toy/product **safe**? Are there any potential hazards? Is the product too small? Any sharp edges or loose ties? Is it non-toxic? Durable? Will it take rough treatment? Can it be easily cleaned? Does it meet Consumer Product Safety Standards? Is there a guarantee?
2. Is the toy/product **fun**? A toy or children's product is supposed to entertain the child. It should amuse, delight, excite, be enjoyable, and provide skill's practice.
3. Is the toy/product **appropriate**? Is the toy/product significant now? Does it fit the child's age, skills and abilities? Will it hold interest? Will child happily use it?
4. Is the toy/product **well-designed**? Is it easy to use? Does it look good? Feel good?
5. Is the toy/product **versatile**? Is there more than one use for it?
6. Is the toy/product **durable**? Will it be something that will last for a long time? Children play hard and subject their toys and products to a lot of wear.
7. Is the toy/product enticing and **engaging** to the child? Does it offer an opportunity for fun, and think? Does it help the child learn? Is the toy or product inviting?
8. Will the toy/product help the child expand **creativity**? With the right products the child can expand imagination in art, crafts, drama, hobbies, language, reading, music, movement, science and technology.
9. Will the toy/product **frustrate or challenge** the child? Does it offer something new to learn, practice, or try? Will the child know how to **use** the product? Or will it be too difficult without adult assistance?
10. Does the toy/product match the **package** and the package match the product? If it does not match ads or packaging it can be disappointing. Is age-grading clear? Is the item in the store like the one shown in print or TV advertisement?
11. Will the toy/product help **nurture** childhood? Does it help the child express emotions, experience concern for others, and practice positive social interaction? Does it provide value to childhood? Or are there any violent, sexist, or other negative aspects to product?
12. What will the toy/product **teach**? Does it help expand positive self-esteem, values, understanding, and cultural awareness? Does it offer practice in skill-building? Eye/hand coordination? Fine and large motor skills? Communication? Does it educate the child about the environment? The community? The world? About history? Science and/or technology? STEM/STEAM? Other skills?
13. Can the product be **cleaned and reused**? If it is not washable, can it be cleaned in a practical way?
14. Is the toy/product affordable? Does the **price** match the value received?

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