



Toys and Toy Safety

Play is essential in the development of infants and toddlers. As children interact with various types of toys or objects, they learn about their world and their influence on it. For example, nine-month-old Emily sits on the kitchen floor hitting the bottom of a saucepan with a wooden spoon. She is learning that when she hits the pan with the wooden spoon, it makes noise. She delights in the sound and in her ability to produce it.

NOTE: These are only guidelines. Every child is unique. Safe choices for play depend on your experience and the developmental stage of the child. It is important to gather information about the child's preferences and abilities when talking with parents/guardians.

Developmental Stage	Age-Appropriate Toys	
Infant: 0-6 months	• Soft mobiles • Rattles • Soft fabric swatches • Mirrors • Soft teething toys • Soft blocks • Activity mats for tummy time	
Infant: 6-12 months	• Wooden spoons with plastic bowls (or pots and pans) • Building blocks • Activity centers (i.e., ExerSaucer®) • Plastic stacking rings • Nesting toys • Shape sorters	• Board books • Push-pull toys
Toddler: 1-3 years	• Large plastic balls • Nesting toys • Drums, xylophones, or other musical instruments • Simple puzzles with knobs • Action toys (i.e., telephones, cars, trucks) • Large plastic toy people, animals, and buildings	• Pails and shovels • Riding toys • Finger paints • Puppets • Building blocks • Books
Preschooler: 3-5 years	• Simple board games • Skates, wagons, and tricycles • Playground equipment (i.e., seesaws, swings, slides, climbing structures) • Toy vehicles (cars, trucks, trains, boats) • Baby dolls	• Arts and crafts supplies • Plastic musical instruments • Books
School-ager: 5 years+	• Arts and crafts supplies • Electronic games • Jump rope • Playground equipment • Bicycles and inline skates • Building sets	• Fashion and action dolls • Books • Hobby/collection items