



Toys and Play: 6, 7, and 8 Year-Olds

This handout gives some guidelines about choosing toys and play activities for children in the developmental stage of 6, 7 and 8 years.

Activities/Abilities

- Large muscle abilities and interests, jumping rope, climbing, ice and, roller-skating, bike riding, water sports, ball play, hopscotch
- Small muscle abilities and interests including printing, drawing with pencils, simple sewing and carpentry, weaving, braiding, stringing small beads, cut-out paper dolls, jigsaw puzzles (has greatly increased fine motor control)
- Interest in: reading, spelling and printing activities, games; simple math activities and games (time, calendars, weight, coin values); nature and simple science experiments; collecting things
- Likes models, crafts, magic tricks, codes
- Great interest in special friends, belonging, secret languages, passwords
- Prefers to play with same-sex peers
- Plays well with others, wants to play “fair”
- Does not like to lose, may cheat to win
- Interest in dramatic play and giving shows
- Beginning interest in wider community
- Basic interest in ball games with simple rules and scoring

Children in this stage are:

- Interested in goal rather than means or process.
- Make experiments more “scientific.”
- Less dependent on concrete object for concept.

Child can:

- Sort and classify in more than one way.
- Make use of reading, writing and simple math in games and toys.
- Use simple mechanical toys (cars, trains).

Child is interested in:

- Time, seasons and toys marking time.
- Collections of things, trading cards.
- Line between fantasy and reality (likes tricks, magic, codes and disguise kits).
- Producing products in arts, crafts, woodworking, etc.
- Kits (science, craft, models); follows simple directions.
- Adult roles; likes realistic costumes and props for character play.
- Basics of sports and skill development.
- Riddles, jokes.

Children's

Hospital & Regional Medical Center
Seattle, Washington

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Active

Ride-on Toys

- Two-wheeled bike, sized to child (should be able to straddle boy's bike with both feet on ground—have child wear helmet)
- Skate boards, push scooters (have child wear helmet; wrist, elbow and knee pads)
- Battery-powered ride-ons

Outdoor/Gym Equipment

- Complex gym sets with rings, bars, swings, ropes, rope ladders, slides
- Complex climbing structures
- Jump ropes

Sports Equipment

- Regular softball bat and ball, basketball, soccer ball, football, frisbee
- Roller and ice skates, roller blades (have child wear helmet and wrist, elbow and knee pads)
- Ski, snow and hockey equipment (with adult supervision)
- Horseshoes, croquet, badminton
- Sleds with steering mechanisms, hand brakes (with adult supervision)
- Simple swimming and underwater equipment (with adult supervision)

Age 8:

- Ping-pong, foosball

Manipulative

Construction Toys

- Large sets of blocks or bricks (80-100 pieces)
- Complex construction sets (woods, plastic, metal)—can manipulate tiny nuts and screws
- Sets with motorized parts, complex gear systems

- Can copy or build models following instructions—prefers realistic models

Puzzles

- Jigsaws (50-100 pieces)
- Three-dimensional puzzles, map puzzles

Pattern-Making Toys

- Design/pattern toys
- Various materials to produce products: wood, plastic, paper, cardboard, beads, ceramic tiles, cloth, block/sponge printing kits to produce designs

Manipulative Toys

- Complex lock boxes
- Balance scales
- Small number rods and blocks
- Math models—illustrating concepts like fractions and arithmetic
- Mechanical models—levers, pulleys, pendulums

Dressing, Lacing, Stringing Toys

- Stringing beads of any size, including pottery, glass or other fragile beads
- Simple sewing, weaving, braiding, jewelry, spool-knitting kits

Sand and Water Play Toys

- Realistic working models of boats, complex sailboats
- Battery-operated, remote control boats
- Sandbox tools and molds of all sizes

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Make-Believe

Dolls

- Likes lots of accessories, clothes, special equipment
- Big baby dolls or of own age, fashion/teenage dolls, collector dolls, hairstyling dolls, paper dolls, fantasy character/action figures, doll house dolls

Stuffed Toys

- Small collectible toys, characters
- Large, floppy stuffed toys (some interest in oversized animals)
- Very realistic toys
- Unusual, unique stuffed toys

Puppets

- Puppet theater with curtains and scenery
- Soft hand puppets, rod puppets, puppets with arms, jointed puppets

Role-Play Materials

- Wall and hand mirrors; adult role dress-ups and elaborate make-up
- Realistic accessories for role-play
- Magic and disguise kits
- Props for dramatic play (store, school, library, office, robots, space)
- Cooking and sewing equipment that really works

Play Scenes

- Doll houses (number of rooms, stories, special furniture and dolls)—interested in minute detail
- Models with more grown-up themes

Transportation Toys

- Little vehicles (3-4 inches) and collectibles
- Large-scale realistic vehicles with working parts
- Elaborate wood or metal train sets
- Simple remote-control vehicles

8 years:

- Electric trains

Creative

Musical Instruments/Arts

- Rhythm instruments
- Learning to play real instrument and read music

Age 7 or 8:

- Formal music lessons

About age 8:

- Dance lessons, gymnastics

Art and Craft Materials

- Crayons, paint, markers, pencils, pastels and art chalks
- Sketch pads, all art papers, construction paper and more complex coloring books
- Regular scissors
- Clay—oil based and self-hardening, plaster of Paris, papier-mâché
- Stencils
- Looms, knitting spool
- Kits: leatherwork, bead-braiding, mosaic tiles, sewing kits with needles, jewelry/copper/enameling kits (with adult supervision)
- More complete woodworking tools (with adult supervision)
- Beginning photography—real camera
- Model airplane, other kits

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Audio-Visual Equipment

- Radio, CD or tape players to run by self
- Blank tapes to make own recordings
- More complex stories and books on CDs or tapes
- Hand-held microphone, headphones

Learning

Games

- Simple strategy and rule games: dominoes, marbles, race games, cards, strategy games, checkers, Chinese checkers, word games, bingo, math games (simple adding/subtracting), rummy, simple spelling games, simple quiz games, simple guessing/deduction games, games based on familiar characters, with fantasy or adventure themes

Specific Skill Development Toys

- Conceptual models—human body, physical world, stars, space, moon
- Science kits: chemistry sets, science models, weather kits
- Calculators (simple functions)
- Clocks and watches
- Balance and other scales
- Protractors
- Microscopes, telescopes, field binoculars
- More complex video/computer games; *age 7 and older*: checkers and chess programs, some target games
- Electronic/computer teaching games: math, drawing/graphics, story writing, word processing, simple programming concepts, music writing
- Hand-held electronic games

Books

- Developing preferences—common interests in childhood classics, myths, legends, biographies, poetry, fairy tales, dictionaries (age-appropriate)
- Books about children, animals, nature, space, planes, electricity, magic

Children play from the moment they're born. It's how they develop and practice the physical, intellectual and social skills they'll need in life.

Choosing toys doesn't need to be stressful once you know some basics about play and safety.

Safety

Toys should meet safety regulations for age:

- No sharp points or edges
- No electrical parts without adult supervision
- Non-toxic materials
- Use the right safety equipment when needed (helmets, life vests, knee pads, etc.)

Nothing can take the place of careful supervision.

For More Information

- **Your health care provider**
- **Children's Resource Line:**
(206) 987-2500 or 1-866-987-2500
toll-free Washington, Alaska, Montana, Idaho
- **www.seattlechildrens.org**

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider.

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