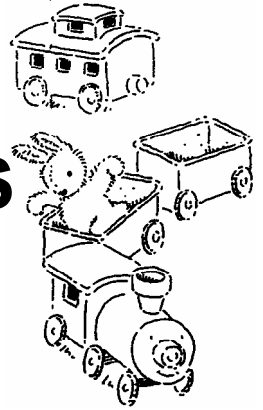


Toys and Play: Older Toddlers-2 Year-Olds



This handout gives some guidelines about choosing toys and play activities for older toddlers.

At this age cooperative, social play and pretend play increases. Toddlers love physical active play. They prefer action toys, toys that produce movement or sounds by their own efforts, more realistic toys and bright colors.

Activities/Abilities

Older Toddlers and Two-Year Olds:

- Do simple large-muscle skills
- Jump from heights
- Climb, hang and roll
- Gallop, somersault, rough and tumble play
- Throw and retrieve objects
- Pushes self on wheeled objects
- Have good hand and finger coordination by age 2½-3
- Like lots of active play with small objects
- Are interested in texture, shape, size, color of objects
- Match similar objects
- Plays with pattern, sequence, order of size
- Begin first counting skills
- Begin first creative activities—drawing, construction, non-toxic molding dough
- Begin to solve problems in head
- Like imaginary play, playing alone or with adult

- Begin cooperative play with other children
- Use words to express wishes
- Enjoy hearing simple stories with repetition
- Are very independent

Active

Push and Pull Toys

- Push toys with short strings
- Doll strollers, wagons, small, light wheelbarrows
- Interest in push toys that look like adult equipment—lawnmowers, vacuums, shopping carts

Ride-on Toys

- Interest in realistic-looking ride-ons—tractors, motorcycles
- Ride-ons with storage trays or bins
- Ride-ons propelled by bouncing up and down

From about 2½ - 3:

- Small tricycle (wheels 10-13 inches) when child begins to pedal (start using a helmet)

Outdoor/Gym Equipment

- Tunnels, climbing structures, slides
- Swings with curved, soft seats

Sports Equipment

- Balls of all sizes, but especially large balls
- Sleds sized to child (shorter length than child's height)
- Spinning seat

Continued

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Manipulative

Construction Toys

- Solid, wood unit blocks
- Large, hollow building blocks (cardboard, wood, plastic)
- Large, plastic bricks (2-4 inches) to be pressed together
- Plastic interlocking rings; large plastic nuts and bolts

Puzzles

- Fit-in puzzles—2 to 2½ years: 4-5 pieces; 2½ to 3 years: 6-12 pieces
- Puzzles with easy to use knobs (knobs firmly attached)

Pattern-Making Toys

- Peg boards with large pegs
- Color cubes
- Magnetic boards with shapes, animals, people

Manipulative Toys

- Fit-together toys of 5-10 pieces
- Nesting toys with multiple pieces, including barrel toys that require screwing motion
- Number/counting boards with large pegs
- Shape sorters with common shapes
- Pounding/hammering toys
- Color/picture dominoes
- Simple lotto matching games based on color/pictures

Dressing, Lacing, Stringing Toys

- Large colored beads
- Lacing cards; cubes for lacing, buttoning, snapping, hooking
- Dressing books and dolls

Sand and Water Play Toys

- Bathtub activity centers

- Tub toys; removable figures, accessories, nesting, linking
- Small boats (no metal parts)
- Small and large sandbox tools (with blunt edges)
- Water/sand mills
- Sprinklers
- Pool or water toys (with adult supervision)

Make Believe

Dolls

- Soft-bodied and rubber baby dolls with hair and moving eyes
- Dolls to fit in child's arms; also small, realistic dolls
- Talking dolls
- Doll accessories (simple and sturdy)—bottle, blanket
- Simple and easy to use clothes (with hook and loops, large snap fasteners, Velcro)

Stuffed Toys

- Soft, pliable animals
- Mother and baby combinations
- Preference for realistic animals, replicas of familiar characters
- Toys with music box inside

Puppets

- Small hand or finger puppets (hand-and-arm puppets too large)
- Lightweight, sized to fit child's hand
- Puppets doubling as stuffed toys
- Puppets representing familiar characters

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Role-Play Materials

- Dress-ups and costumes
- Child-sized stove/oven, fridge, and other equipment (large boxes work well)
- All housekeeping props—cleaning sets, pots and pans
- Toys that can be pushed—vacuums, lawnmowers, shopping carts
- Full-length mirror

Play Scenes

- Familiar, realistic-looking scenes—farm, garage, airport
- Scenes with multiple pieces but not highly detailed
- Preference for moving parts, parts that make noise
- Interior of scenes easy to access
- Vehicle sets with figures

Transportation Toys

- Small, realistic cars (not metal)
- Vehicles with moving parts, removable figures, accessories
- Large trucks (not metal) with moving parts
- Small trains with simple coupling mechanism—no tracks

Creative

Musical Instruments

- All rhythm instruments—bells, rattles, cymbals, drums, triangle, rhythm sticks, sand blocks

Around 2½:

- Horns and whistles

Art and Craft Materials

- Large crayons, sturdy markers (non-toxic)
- Paints (non-toxic) and brushes with blunt ends
- Molding dough

- Scissors with blunt ends
- Chalkboard, large chalk
- Colored construction paper

Audio-Visual Equipment

- Tapes, CDs operated with help from adult
- Hand-cranked music box if crank is large and easy to turn

Learning

Games

- Lotto matching games, based on colors, pictures
- Large dominoes
- Board games based on chance—only a few pieces or pairs

Specific Skill Development Toys

- Simple teaching toys for matching/sorting, shapes, colors, letters/sounds, numbers, concepts

Books

- Sturdy board books
- Short, simple stories with repetition and familiar subjects
- Simple pictures with color, few details
- Pop-up books
- Hidden picture books
- Activity books (dressing, lift-the-flap)

Children play from the moment they're born. They need to play because play is how they learn about themselves and their world. It's how they develop and practice the physical, intellectual and social skills they'll need in life.

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Choosing toys need not be a stressful task. Play is mostly fun, and selecting playthings can be too, once you know some basics about play and safety.

Safety

Toys should meet safety regulations for age:

- Sturdy, non-breakable; not likely to break into small pieces; strong enough for child to stand on or in
- Non-toxic materials
- No sharp points or edges
- Too large to be lodged in throat, ears, nostrils
- No detachable small parts
- No parts that could pinch or entrap fingers, toes, hair
- Not put together with easily exposed straight pins, sharp wires, nails
- No electrical parts
- 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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