

# CHOOSING CHILDREN'S TOYS

**Tips for choosing toys that promote healthy play and avoiding toys that undermine it**

## Top Ten Questions to Ask Before You Buy

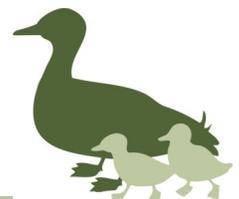
1. Is the toy developmentally appropriate?
  - challenging but not frustrating
  - appropriate level of complexity
  - appeals to age level (color, shape, style)
2. Does the toy encourage multiple approaches to play?
  - variety of developmental areas or stages
  - does not have a fixed functionality
3. Is the toy safe?
  - passes the choke test
  - no sharp edges or danger to eyes
  - is not a suffocation hazard
4. Is it appropriate for intended use?
  - fits in the available space or stores easily
  - works indoors or outdoors
  - can be enjoyed by more than one child
5. Is it durable or made for extended use?
  - waterproof; easy to clean
  - will have play value beyond a few weeks or months
6. Are the play opportunities open-ended?
  - stimulates different ways of thinking
  - more than one right answer or method of use
7. Is the toy free of stereotypes?
  - multicultural or unisex
  - does not dictate a certain role
8. Will the addition of the toy add variety to the existing play setting?
9. Is the toy non-violent in nature?
10. Is the toy a responsible purchase?
  - is not disposable
  - toy and packaging may be recycled
  - price of toy reflects value
  - toy is within your budget



### More...

**Non-violent vs Violent Toys**

**Toys to Avoid**



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## Non-violent vs Violent Toys

### Violent toys:

- encourage children to act out aggressive scenarios
- teach violence is the best way to settle a dispute
- depict violence as fun, harmless and “cool”
- glamorize war and combat
- promote male dominance and female passivity
- provide negative depiction of ethnic groups
- promote excessive materialism
- foster aggressive competition
- lead to anti-social behavior
- condone environmental destruction

### Non-violent toys:

- promote prosocial behaviors
- encourage building and creating rather than destroying
- stimulate creativity and imaginative play
- promote cooperation and problem-solving
- encourage creation of scenarios rather than recreation of television, movie or video game plots
- are free of racist and sexist stereotypes
- promote learning new skills and help children develop their own talents
- are open-ended with no predetermined “right” or “wrong”
- challenge children to think for themselves

## Toys to Avoid

- Toys that make violence the focus of play
- Toys that make sexiness and appearance the focus of play
- Toys and games that encourage imitation of something seen on the screen
- Toys masquerading as books rather than encouraging children to make out the meaning of pictures and print
- Toys that teach very young children to push buttons rather than to interact and explore

