

# SELECTING APPROPRIATE TOYS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

When choosing toys for your child, it is necessary to consider the child's age. Listed are some things to consider when selecting age-appropriate toys.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children younger than age 2 should not be exposed to screen time. Screen time is any time spent watching television or videos on a phone, computer, or other devices.

Safety is also important. Toys that are safe for children to handle are in good working order with no broken parts and no sharp edges.

**SAFETY NOTE: Any toys or materials that can fit inside a paper towel roll can be a choking hazard for infants and toddlers. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, any object handled by young children should be at least 1.25 inches in diameter and 2.25 inches long.**

Toys and materials for infants from birth to 6 months:

- Soft, cloth materials that are small enough for an infant to grasp, like books, balls, blocks, or dolls. (Make sure no items pose a choking hazard. Dolls should not have button eyes or other small parts that can come loose because these can become a choking hazard.)
- Safety mirrors at infant's eye level
- Large pictures of familiar people, objects, or common animals
- Rattles or other teething toys that can be washed in hot water
- Musical CDs
- Materials with various textures (rough, soft, bumpy, smooth, furry, etc.)

Toys and materials for infants ages 7 to 12 months:

- Cloth and cardboard books
- Nesting cups or clean containers that fit into each other
- Stacking rings
- Tunnels
- Pop-up toys
- Musical CDs
- Large, soft blocks
- Push and pull toys
- Soft baby dolls

Toys and materials for 1-year-olds:

- Board books
- Musical CDs
- Puzzles and pegboards
- Washable markers or chunky crayons
- Soft toy dolls
- Large plastic animals
- Balls
- Push and pull toys
- Cardboard boxes
- Large blocks
- Pop-up toys
- Nesting cups or clean containers that fit into each other
- Stacking rings



### Toys and materials for 2-year-olds:

- Large plastic cars, trucks, or other vehicles that are not choking hazards
- Large cardboard boxes
- Balls
- Musical CDs
- Picture books
- Wood puzzles with no more than 12 pieces
- Large interlocking blocks
- Child-sized furniture
- Dolls and accessories
- Objects that can be sorted by various characteristics (color, size, length, shape)
- Dress-up clothes
- Real-life toys (recycled phones, keyboards, laptops, etc.)
- Magnetic alphabet letters
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- Riding toys



### Toys and materials for 3- to 6-year-olds:

- Puzzles (no more than 25 pieces)
- Riding toys
- Wooden blocks
- Interlocking blocks
- Magnetic tiles
- Art materials (paint, paintbrushes, stamps, sponges, easels, child-proof scissors, etc.)
- Musical CDs
- Balls
- Books (including wordless books)
- Dress-up clothes
- Dolls and doll accessories
- Plastic bowling pins
- Wagons



### References

Mississippi Child Care Resource & Referral. (2012). Director's Credential Program. Mississippi State, MS: MSU Extension Service.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (n.d.). Good toys for young children by age and stage. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/toys>

Zero to Three. (n.d.). Choosing toys for toddlers. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1076-tips-for-choosing-toys-for-toddlers>



**Publication 2984** (POD-10-19)

By **Louise E. Davis**, PhD, Extension Professor, and **Elizabeth Thorne**, MS, former Publications Specialist, Human Sciences.

Copyright 2019 by Mississippi State University. All rights reserved. This publication may be copied and distributed without alteration for nonprofit educational purposes provided that credit is given to the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Produced by Agricultural Communications.

Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution. Discrimination in university employment, programs, or activities based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status protected by applicable law is prohibited. Questions about equal opportunity programs or compliance should be directed to the Office of Compliance and Integrity, 56 Morgan Avenue, P.O. 6044, Mississippi State, MS 39762, (662) 325-5839.

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. GARY B. JACKSON, Director