

## **Holiday Toy Ideas for Young Children**

Are you looking for inexpensive toys that are also educational? Consider some of these ideas for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. Remember that children learn best by using all 5 of their senses, actively manipulating objects, and by listening to others talk and interact with them. Toys need not be expensive or high-tech.

Babies enjoy toys with texture appeal, bright colors, sounds, and objects that can be held. Ideas include:

- nursery rhyme music
- soft balls (Koosh ball, light up balls, water bomb balls, beach ball, etc.)
- rattles that vibrate, crackle, squeak, or rattle
- board books, vinyl books, or fabric books with bright pictures
- water toys for the bathtub (plastic ducks, fish, etc.)
- plastic interlocking beads plus a container for dumping and filling

Toddlers enjoy toys that allow stacking, pushing/pulling, make music, can be rolled, and are soft for hugging. Ideas include:

- Soft dolls, stuffed animals, or hand puppets
- Bucket with sand/water toys (shovel, measuring cups, funnels, etc.)
- Nesting cups, stacking rings, large blocks
- Paper, crayons, and washable markers
- Balls, vehicles, etc. that roll
- Simple puzzles, shape sorters, etc.
- Music makers: piano, music cd, tambourine, etc.
- Board books about children, animals, familiar things

Preschoolers enjoy toys that encourage pretend play, construction, movement, and learning games. Ideas include:

- Picture lotto cards, dominoes, lego, puzzles, sewing/lacing cards
- Wooden blocks and accessories like people, small vehicles, animals, etc.
- Music activities like instruments, music cds, scarves for dancing, etc.
- Crafts like paper, scissors, crayons, markers, glue, play-doh, paints and brushes, etc.
- Puppets, books, poems, fingerplays
- Dress-up clothes: everyday, characters, fantasy, etc.
- Nature items like rocks, bugs, dinosaurs, etc. (books on topic, magnifying glass, collections, etc.)