

TINY BITS (BETTER INFORMED TOGETHER) FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP
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Choosing Toys for Your Child's Stage of Play

Play is an important part of healthy child development. With the holiday season upon us, and thousands of toy options, we are reminded of how overwhelming it can be to choose toys for the children in our lives. We want to make sure that the toys we are giving them foster opportunities to learn and grow. In this edition of Tiny Bits, we want to discuss how play is applied in a child's stage of development. Additionally, we want to provide suggestions of toys you can look for to keep children engaged in play.

6-12 months- In this stage, children will explore the world with purpose. Children in this age group love repetition and need repetition to learn cause and effect. They will work on perfecting the "pincer" grasp as well as pointing. This is also the stage where children will start to roll, sit up, crawl, and walk. This increased freedom of movement will be incorporated into play. Toys that can be considered in this stage include:

- Rattles and musical instruments
- Baby safe blocks
- Simple puzzles with knobs
- Stacking toys and cups
- Toys that can be pushed and pulled such as cars or trucks

12-24 months- In this stage children are focused on problem solving and how objects work together. Social skills are starting to develop, and children will often enjoy playing close to peers. They will start to communicate verbally and will incorporate that communication into play. They are moving even more than in the previous stage (ie: running, climbing, throwing). Some toys that can be considered in this stage include:

- Sand/water play
- Art related activities such as finger paints or sidewalk chalk
- Balls of various sizes
- Toy telephones
- Dolls, stuffed animals, puppets

24-36 months- In this stage, pretend play begins. Children begin using props (like a bottle to feed his/her doll) and imaginary play becomes more complex (a round pillow is a pizza). Problem solving skills become more advanced and language skills continue to progress. Your child is learning new words every day and may be talking 2-3-word sentences. Some toys that can be considered in this stage include

- Toy Kitchen sets
- Accessories for dolls such as bottles and blankets
- Toy cars and trucks
- Memory games
- Board Books

Excerpted from:

<http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/313-stages-of-play-from-6-12-months-discovering-connections>

<http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/314-stages-of-play-from-12-24-months-young-toddlers-are-problem-solvers>

<http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/315-stages-of-play-from-24-36-months-the-world-of-imagination>

