

Adapted from our November, 2014 Newsletter



Using and Choosing Holiday Gifts

When choosing holiday gifts (or really, gifts at any time of the year), it's important to be sure that your choices are both age and developmentally appropriate for the recipient. To help ensure that you make worthwhile gift choices for your children and grandchildren, we regularly update our [Holiday Gift Guides](#) and [Amazon Store](#).

Our therapists have recommended age appropriate toys and products that are targeted to specific skills (like promoting fine motor or visual play). While more toys and more electronics are not necessarily better, it is great to re-refresh your inventory with things that you know will be helpful to your children. You don't have to brave the crowds, but can just sit back at home, check out the [Guides](#), and then click the link to our recommended toys in our Amazon Store.



We love to recommend toys that create opportunities for your child to use their imagination and to move. Consider: a fold up gymnastics mat, some pop up tunnels and tents, and bean bag chairs to create a cozy space. A few soft blankets, pillows, flashlights and books make the perfect hide out, camping trip or magic carpet for your children to play. You can fold things up and tuck them under a bed when you need your living room back. With large motor equipment, imaginations take over,

and it provides opportunities to practice yoga positions, tumbling routines and hide and seek games.

For table top and older children, look at the manipulative tools that are required to determine if the toy may be extra worthwhile for your child. Play is the best way to get kids to practice their emerging skills. If there are little grippers, mallets, scoopers or point and push opportunities in the game it may be the just right choice. Honey Bee Tree, Bed Bugs, Wok and Roll, Hi Ho Cherry-O, and Sneaky Snacky Squirrel are some of our favorites. Of course the Play Doh Fun Factories or Drill and Fill that require pressure and pinch are great to promote strengthening and small motor skill development.

Stuck on Elmo or Ninjas? Look for toys and items that promote the theme but require some motor and perceptual effort from your child. Tracing sets, coloring and cutting, assembly activities, all will attract your child if the theme du jour is incorporated.

For older students, a particular favorite is Snap Circuits. It requires great visual attention, planning, following instructions, plotting grid points and has an electrical outcome that is very rewarding. Also, Squiggle Wiggle Writers and scratch light sets are ideal for building stability in hand muscles.

Ask your therapist for a few suggestions from our [Holiday Guides](#). Consider creating sensory, motor and imagination centers in your house. A pop up tent, sleeping bag and flashlight, small table and chairs and bean bag chair go a long way to making the holiday house a very fun place. Don't forget to save the gigantic box from the new refrigerator or dishwasher that you just happened to need. They make the best toys EVER!!!!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL OF US!!!!