

Promote
Learning
through Play

...A Resource Guide for
Families

From your Local Early Intervention Coordinating Council Sub-Committee

When directed by an adult, activities and toy suggestions in this packet can enhance and develop many skills in young children. These skills including (but not limited to); eye contact, joint attention, imitation, following directions, symbolic/pretend play, labeling, and much more... Talk to your providers about how to incorporate these ideas into your child's day!

Cause & Effect

Cause and effect toys are toys that require a child to perform a specific action, such as pushing a button, to get an immediate reaction, such as a door popping open; some ideas are...

- Pop up toys with buttons, dials, etc.
- Mirror
- Simple electronic toys
- Push & go toys
- Wind up toys
- Jack-in-the-box
- Musical instruments
- Pop up books
- Bubbles
- Peek-a-boo

Pretend Play

Pretend play involves any toy or object that allows a child to use their imagination to "act out" familiar scenarios and express themselves through play. Some ideas are...

- Farm with animals
- Doll house with people and accessories
- Mr. Potato Head
- Kitchen set
- BBQ set
- Doctor kit
- Cars/trucks/buses/planes
- Dress up clothes
- Dolls and bottles
- Pretend food
- Musical instruments
- Cash register
- Puppets
- Tea set
- Vacuum/play cleaning tools
- Play gardening tools
- Workbench
- Car garage
- Pirate ship
- Airport

Fine Motor

Fine motor toys are those that require a child to use the small muscles of their hands/upper body to complete tasks; some ideas are...

- Pop beads
- Puzzles
(inset/interlocking/frameless)
- Blocks of various sizes
- Nesting cups/blocks
- Interlocking blocks
- Stacking cubes
- Peg board
- Shape sorter
- Clothes pins/tongs/chop sticks
- Crayons/markers
- Stringing beads of various sizes
- Lacing cards
- Dot markers
- Cookie cutters/dough
- Spray bottles
- Hole/Paper punchers
- Draw/Color on vertical surface/easel
- Finger paint with brushes, cotton balls, Q-tips
- Tear and crumple tissue paper
- Stamps
- Stickers
- Open/close jars/lids
- Coins in coin bank Dry erase markers with board and/or sentence strips to draw and write
- Wall push ups
- Foam shapes, letters, numbers, objects with paper to make collages, pictures, etc.

Gross Motor

Gross motor toys are those that will encourage a child to use and strengthen the big muscles of their body/lower body; some ideas are...

- Balls
- Tricycles
- Ride on toys
- Trampoline
- Floor gym
- Yoga mat
- Hippity hop
- Bean bags (w/music cd and activities)
- Parachute
- Push toys
- Tunnels
- Playground equipment
- Movement CD

Sensory

Sensory activities are “hands on” activities that allow a child to use their senses to learn about and experience the world around them and regulate their bodies. Some ideas are...

- Small bins or trays filled with:
 - Shaving cream
 - Whipped cream
 - Beans
 - Rice
 - Cooked pasta
 - Water
 - Sand
 - Cotton balls
 - Pom poms
- Bubble wrap
- Finger paint
- Silly putty
- Sensory box w/different textured items (ie: rough/smooth/crinkly etc.)
- Trampoline
- Hippity hop
- Balls
- Swings
- Slide
- Heavy “work”
 - Pushing/pulling full laundry basket
 - Carrying a bucket full of beanbags
- Sensory bottles *see directions at end
- Pillow “fights”
- Ball pit
- Scooter boards
- Gently roll large ball over child’s body-
Make a sandwich
- Help with chores (wipe windows/tables, push vacuum, sweep)
- Wheel barrel walking/animal walking
- Roll child’s body in blanket like a “Burrito”
- Bear hugs
- Roll/catch heavy ball
- Assist in baking-mix ingredients, carry items, mash into hands
- Crawl in tunnel-mini obstacle course
- Setup a quiet corner (tent, box with blanket on top to make dark)
- Deep pressure massage
- Tug-o-war

Around the House

Don’t forget, there are many household items that can be used for activities as well. Children love to use “real life” items in play; they can let their imaginations run wild! Some ideas are...

- Empty boxes
- Toilet paper/paper towel rolls
- Wooden spoons
- Pots & pans
- Tupperware
- Yarn/string/ribbon
- Large dry pasta
- Clothespins
- Magazines
- Straws
- Cotton balls
- Scarves
- Cookie cutters
- Home-made Play-dough/Flubber/Goop (Recipes attached)
- Music/Nursery Rhyme CDs
- Put away grocery items into cabinets. Carry items at grocery store.

10 (Non-Tech) Holiday Gift Ideas to Promote Kids' Language, Learning

November 29, 2016 By: [Diane Paul](#) and [Adena Dacy](#)

The holiday shopping season is upon us and wish lists from children of all ages likely include tablets, MP3 players, headphones and other technology gifts. But audiologists and speech-language pathologists should take advantage of this time to help clients, family and friends find a technology balance and spread awareness about high-quality off-line activities, too. *Of course, children who use low- and high-tech augmentative and alternative communication devices (AAC) should continue to use them at all times—and in an interactive way.*

The holidays provide an ideal opportunity to get back to the basics in childhood play and use them to foster communication and social interaction. Enjoy these ideas for low(er)-tech holiday gifts to do just that.

1. **Traditional toys**, according to numerous studies, remain superior to electronic toys for children's language development. For example, when toys talk, parents talk less—and subsequently, kids vocalize less. Blocks, dolls, musical instruments, cars/trains, shape-sorters and other low-tech toys get kids—and parents!—talking, singing, playing and interacting. These all help build foundational communication skills.
2. **Books** always make excellent presents, and sharing the joy of reading is a lifelong gift. For infants and toddlers, books with textures inviting touch are ideal, as are colorful board and picture books. For kids just learning how to read, give books appropriate to their skill level to facilitate emerging literacy. For older children, find engaging chapter books and book series. Family members can take turns reading chapters aloud. This may be the start of a family book club.
3. **Board, card and conversation-based question games** can be enjoyed together as a family and get everyone talking and laughing. There are games for all age ranges. And what better time of year than winter to begin family game nights for building conversation, connections—and fun!
4. **Costumes and other dress-up accessories** allow kids to use their imaginations and foster creativity. Children's language skills expand as they make up dialogues, tell stories and take turns.
5. **Building toys, blocks and crafts** yield fun indoor activities to occupy kids on cold days. They also help hone fine motor skills for all ages. For young children, motor skills are closely linked to language development.
6. **Outdoor toys** such as balls, sleds, jump ropes and yard games encourage running, jumping, sports and other active play. Physical activity and movement prime children for learning.
7. **Puzzles**—ranging from basic options for young children to complex types the whole family can attempt as a team—spur conversation while building analytical, problem-solving and other skills.

8. **Cooking supplies** work as fun gifts for children of almost any age. Involving young kids in making and trying new foods offers a wealth of opportunity for conversation and language-building, including likes/dislikes, tastes, textures, and more. For older kids, cooking together sets the scene for family bonding. Following recipes also helps improve reading and comprehension skills, planning, organization, sequencing, and following directions.
9. **Crayons, colored pencils, coloring books** and other writing supplies are not only child-approved, but also help children build literacy skills.
10. **Tickets to child-friendly shows**, sporting events or other performances allow parents and kids to enjoy special activities together. These outings promote family interaction, conversation and bonding. In addition, memberships to local zoos, museums or aquariums make great gifts for entire families to enjoy.

Technology gifts likely will remain on many gift lists, but use holiday gift-giving to encourage parents to mix it up when shopping. When they do buy those tech items for their kids, remind parents to lay out some ground rules for using the devices, make a family media plan, and strive to use technology interactively with kids when possible.

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Places to Find Toys at Bargain Prices

Gently Used

- **Once Upon a Child**
Somers Commons Shopping
Center
80 Route 6
Baldwin Place, NY 10505
Phone: 914.621.0003
Hours: Mon-Sat 9:30 – 7:00
Sun 12:00 – 5:00
*Offers a customer appreciation
card...For every \$10 in
merchandise you buy, you earn
a stamp. Once you have 20
stamps your next purchase is
15% off.
*They purchase gently used
children's clothing, toys, baby
gear furniture, etc.

New

- **Marshall's**
100 Independent Way
Brewster, NY 10509
Phone: 845.940.1740
Hours: Mon-Sat 9:30 – 9:30
Sun 11:00 – 8:00
- **HomeGoods**
Somers Commons Shopping
Center
86 Route 6
Baldwin Place, NY 10505
Phone: (914) 621-5982
Hours: Mon-Sat 9:00-10:00
Sun 9:00 - 8:00
- **TJ Maxx Mt. Kisco**
506 Main Street
Mt. Kisco, NY 10549
Phone: 914.241.3292
Hours: Mon-Sat 9:30 – 9:30
Sun 11:00 – 8:00
- **TJ Maxx Yorktown**
10 Triangle Shopping Center
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
Phone: 914.245.4745
Hours: Mon-Sat 9:30 – 9:30
Sun 11:00 – 8:00

Online Shopping Ideas for Educational Toys

www.onestepahead.com

www.lakeshorelearning.com

www.sensationalbeginnings.com

www.constructiveplaythings.com

www.youngexplorers.com

www.kaplantoys.com

www.hearthsong.com

[www.discountschoolsupply.com](http://www.discountchoolsupply.com)

www.fatbraintoys.com

www.littlezenminds.com

www.melissaanddoug.com

www.growingtreetoys.com

www.ebeanstalk.com

Play Ideas and child development Information

www.zerotothree.org

Toy recall information

www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/category/toy.html

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Recipes

Flubber

Solution A:

1 ½ cups warm water

2 cups Elmers glue

Food coloring

Solution B:

4 teaspoons Borax

1 1/3 cups warm water

Mix solution A in one bowl and mix solution B in another bowl. Dissolve both well. Then pour solution A into solution B, DO NOT MIX. Just lift out flubber. Store in zip lock bag.

Kool-aid Play-dough

2 ½ cups flour

1 cup salt

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

2 cups boiling water (can be done in microwave)

2 packages unsweetened Kool-aid

Mix dry ingredients. Add oil and water. Wearing gloves, knead for 10 minutes or until right consistency. Store in zip lock bag.

Goop

4 parts cornstarch

1 part water

Food coloring (optional)

Add water gradually to cornstarch. Stir with fingers. Store in air tight container.

Edible Finger Paint

1 cup flour

1 cup cool water

3 cups boiling water

Food coloring

Mix the flour and cool water in a cooking pot. Gradually pour in the boiling hot water. Place on stove, and continue to stir constantly until it comes to a boil. Remove from heat. Stir in food coloring, and allow to cool. (If you would like to have multiple colors, separate the mix into different bowls before adding colors!)

Can be stored for one or two days in the refrigerator.