



Top Ten Tips for Buying Toys

Prepared by the National Lekotek Center

Selecting a toy for a child who has a disability? Here are the questions that the play experts at the National Lekotek Center ask when choosing developmentally appropriate toys for kids with special needs. Use these questions to guide you in making the right match between the child for whom you're buying and the toys in the *Toys "R" Us Toy Guide for Differently-Abled Kids*.

1. MULTI-SENSORY APPEAL

Does the toy respond with lights, sounds or movement to engage the child?
Are there contrasting colors? Does it have a scent? Is there texture?

2. METHOD OF ACTIVATION

Will the toy provide a challenge without frustration? What is the force required to activate?
What are the number and complexity of steps required to activate?

3. PLACES THE TOY WILL BE USED

Will the toy be easy to store? Is there space in the home?
Can the toy be used in a variety of positions such as side-lying or on a wheelchair tray?

4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

Can play be open-ended with no definite right or wrong way?
Is it adaptable to the child's individual style, ability and pace?

5. CURRENT POPULARITY

Is it a toy that will help the child with special needs feel like "any other kid"?
Does it tie in with other activities like books and art sets that promote other forms of play?

6. SELF-EXPRESSION

Does the toy allow for creativity, uniqueness and making choices?
Will it give the child experience with a variety of media?

7. ADJUSTABILITY

Does it have adjustable height, sound volume, speed and level of difficulty?

8. CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL ABILITIES

Does the toy provide activities that reflect both developmental and chronological ages?
Does it reflect the child's interests and age?

9. SAFETY AND DURABILITY

Does the toy fit with the child's size and strength? Does it have moisture resistance?
Are the toy and its parts sized appropriately? Can it be washed and cleaned?

10. POTENTIAL FOR INTERACTION

Will the child be an active participant during use? Will the toy encourage social engagement with others?

The toys featured in the *Toys "R" Us Toy Guide for Differently-Abled Kids* have been selected and evaluated by the National Lekotek Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to making play accessible for children with disabilities. For assistance in selecting toys or play activities for a child who has disabilities, please visit the Lekotek website at:

www.lekotek.org

