

Twirl Present Perfect

Stuck on what to give? Why not start here with this list of age-appropriate toys, compiled by the American Association of Pediatrics? For each category, we've suggested a toy from our own range that would make the perfect present for the child you are buying for, along with this year's American Specialty Toy Retailers Association award-winner, where applicable.

Newborn to 1-year-old baby

Choose brightly colored, appealing toys that are made with safe materials, and that will be used by a child through several stages of development.

1. Cloth, plastic or board books with large pictures
We suggest: Words by the Handful, Mimi Vance or visit Moby Dickens for a great selection of children's books.
2. Large blocks of wood or plastic
We suggest: Pado Blocks, Twig by Fat Brain Toys or Block Set by Green Toys
3. Pots and pans
We suggest: Dish Set by Green Toys
4. Rattles
We suggest: Educo Wooden
5. Soft, washable animals, dolls or balls
We suggest: Organic Soft Toys by Miyim or Snuggle Pods
6. Bright, movable objects that are out of baby's reach
We suggest: Manhattan Skwish & Whoozit Mobiles
8. Floating bath toys
We suggest: BUD mini ducks or water blocks
9. Squeeze toys
We suggest: Sofie Girafe by Vulli
10. Squeeze toys
We suggest: Chewbeads

1- to 2-year-old toddler

Toys for this age should be safe and able to withstand a toddler's curious nature.

1. Cloth, plastic or board books with large pictures
We suggest: We suggest: Words by the Handful, Mimi Vance or visit Moby Dickens for a great selection of children's books.
2. Sturdy dolls
We suggest: Calin by Corolle or Corolle's Tidoo Raspberry (ASTRA Best Toy 2011) and Baby Stella's Playtime Potty by Manhattan Toy (ASTRA Best Toy 2011)
3. Kiddy cars
We suggest: Green Toys (Dump, Fire, Recycling)

4. Musical toys

We suggest: Early Melodies Pound & Tap Bench (ASTRA Best Toy 2011)

5. Push and pull toys

We suggest: Squirrel Pull by Kid-O or Smart frames Animal Runner

6. Stacking & Nesting Blocks

We suggest: Cone Stacker by Sprig

3 to 5-year-old preschooler

Toys for this age group can be creative or imitate the activity of parents and older children.

1. Books

We suggest: "Same Same but Different" by Jenny Sue Kosteck-Shaw, or visit Moby Dickens for a great selection of children's books.

2. Blackboard and chalk

We suggest: Natural Slate, Merry Thoughts or Melissa & Doug Magnetic Chalk Dry Erase Board

3. Building blocks and Imaginative Play

We suggest: Tegu Magnetic Wooden Blocks (ASTRA Best Toy 2011), Citiblocks or Calico Critters Family Camper (ASTRA Best Toy 2011)

4. Crayons, nontoxic finger paints, clay

We suggest: Soy Crayon Rocks, Crayon Rocks or Eco Stars & Recycled Crayon Sticks by Intl Arrivals or Mary's Soft Dough or Clementine Art Products

5. Hammer and bench

We suggest: 15pc Tool Set, Green Toys or Melissa & Doug Tool Set

6. Housekeeping toys

We suggest: Cash Register by Learning Resources (ASTRA Best Toy 2011) or Hape Health Gourmet Salad (ASTRA Best Toy 2011) or Bake & Decorate Donut Set by Melissa & Doug or Mop & Broom by Schylling

7. Outdoor toys: sandbox (with a lid), slide, swing, playhouse

We suggest: Walrus Connecting Sleds, Freestyle Spooner Board (ASTRA Best Toy 2011)

8. Transportation toys (tricycles, cars, wagons)

We suggest: Y Bikes or Plasma Cars or Mishi Design Vehicles

9. Simple puzzles with large pieces and games

We suggest: Jr. Peg Puzzle & Jr. Discovery Puzzle, Eboo Tea Party & Zingo 123 by Think Fun

10. Dress-up clothes

We suggest: Crusader Sets and Princesses, Creative Education

11. Tea party utensils

We suggest: Tea Set by Green Toy or Tin Tea Set, Schylling

5- to 9-year-old child

Toys for this age group should help your child develop new skills and creativity.

1. Blunt scissors, sewing sets
We suggest: Harrisville Designs Potholder Kit (ASTRA Best Toy 2011) or My Friendship Bracelet Maker.
2. Card games
We suggest: Classic Card Games, TRUMP
3. Doctor and nurse kits
We suggest: Doctor Kit by Schylling
4. Hand puppets
We suggest: Puppets by Folkmanis
5. Crafts & Science
We suggest: Sticky Mosaics by Orb Factory, Big Bag of Science by Be Amazing (ASTRA Best Toy 2011), Kits for Kids by Jaw bones, Shrinky Dinks Fairy Garden by Creativity for Kids (ASTRA Best Toy 2011) or Happily Ever After Jewelry Box by The Orb Factory (ASTRA Best Toy 2011)
6. Paper dolls
We suggest: Magnetic Paper Dolls, Mudpuppy
7. Jump ropes
We suggest: Jump Rope 8" & 16" by JJItoys
8. Sports equipment
We suggest: Plasma Car, Plasmart or Zing Z-Curve Bow (ASTRA Best Toy 2011)
9. Table games
We suggest: Perplexus Rookie (ASTRA Best Toy 2011) or Trigger (ASTRA Best Toy 2011) or Fastrack by Blue Orange Games (ASTRA Best Toy 2011) or Bananagrams by Bananagrams, LLC or Table Tennis

10- to 14-year-old child

Hobbies and scientific activities are ideal for this age group.

1. Sewing, knitting, needlework
We suggest: Knitting Crochet, Klutz Safety Pin Bracelets (ASTRA Best Toy 2011),
2. Microscopes/telescopes
We suggest: Megaview – Uncle Milton or Illumax Slide Microscope
3. Science Kits
We suggest: Ant Farms, Thames Kits, or Snap Circuits/Chemistry Sets
4. Table and board games
We suggest: Anomia, PathWords by ThinkFun (ASTRA Best Toy 2011), or

Cribbage or Ball of Whacks, 16 Puzzle

5. Sports equipment

We suggest: Mashonga, Faux Bow by Marky Sparky or Squap by Diggin Active.

6. Hobby collections and Skill Development Toys

We suggest: nanoblocks by Ohio Art (ASTRA Best Toy 2011), Metal Marvels, Remote Control Machines by Thames & Kosmos (ASTRA Best Toy 2011), Perplexus (ASTRA Best Toy 2011), Sustainable Earth or Astro Jax