

Learning on the Go—Literacy Tips for Young Children

Safe and Stimulating Toys

With so many toy recalls, how is a parent to know what is or isn't safe? A general guideline is to provide your child with well-made toys that are appropriate for her age. Make sure paint is non-toxic and free of lead. Ask yourself if the toy could come apart or hurt your child in any way. Check your toys often for damage that could affect their safety. If you want to see a list of recalled toys, go to the website of the Consumer Product Safety Commission at www.cpsc.gov.

But toys need to be much more than safe for our children! Toys need to be fun and stimulating so that children learn while they play. Don't give your child toys that can be played with in just one way, such as pushing a button to make them turn on. Yes, some of them are really cute, but your child will learn more and play with a toy longer if s/he can shake it, push it, stack it, nest it, and much more! Classic toys are often the best choices, along with free (but safe) things found in your home. Some ideas are: blocks, construction sets, bowls and lids, puzzles, play dough, dress-up clothes, dolls, cars and trains, ride-on toys, sand and water, paper and markers, balls, and BOOKS! Does this list sound like what you played with when you were a child? Perhaps Mother really did know best!