

What makes a Good Toy?

Toys are the tools children use in play. Every plaything should measure up to this tall task.

Is it Safe?

A good toy should pass the drop test and a lot more. Be it wood, metal, plastic, or fabric, the basic material should be durable and well-finished. Avoid toys with sharp edges and long cords. Abide by any age-specific safety warnings, such as small parts which may present choking hazards for children under three years old.

Is it Age Appropriate?

The play activity should developmentally suit the child's age. Check the toy maker's recommendations and believe in the "+" sign. Ages 3+ does not mean your 4-year-old has outgrown it. If in doubt, consult with the toy experts. ASTRA specialty retailers are very astute when it comes to matching activities to specific ages.

Does it Engage the Child?

A good toy should encourage open-ended play, invite exploration, and engage a child's interest beyond a short sitting. Toys should be hands-on tools – not watch-me players. A child should be able to power a plaything – even a battery-operated toy – with his or her own ideas and imagination.

Does it Expand the Child?

A good toy with play value benefits the child at a particular stage by introducing and reinforcing age-specific skills. A great toy grows with the child, helping her or him advance from one developmental stage to the next.

Does it Add to the Toy Box?

A child needs a variety of toys and different types of play activities. When selecting a new toy, consider one that adds balance to your child's busy play.

Is it Fun?

Most of all, a good toy is fun to play with. Dull and boring, regardless of benefit, have no place in a good toy box.

ASTRA is **Leading the Way Through Play** by providing quality products that help children have fun, achieve success and lead happy, healthy lives. The largest association for companies in the toy and children's products arenas, ASTRA brings retailers, manufacturers, and industry affiliates together to help deliver offerings that serve children's best interests. To learn more about ASTRA and to locate ASTRA retailers nationwide, log onto www.astratoy.org

"We don't stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing."

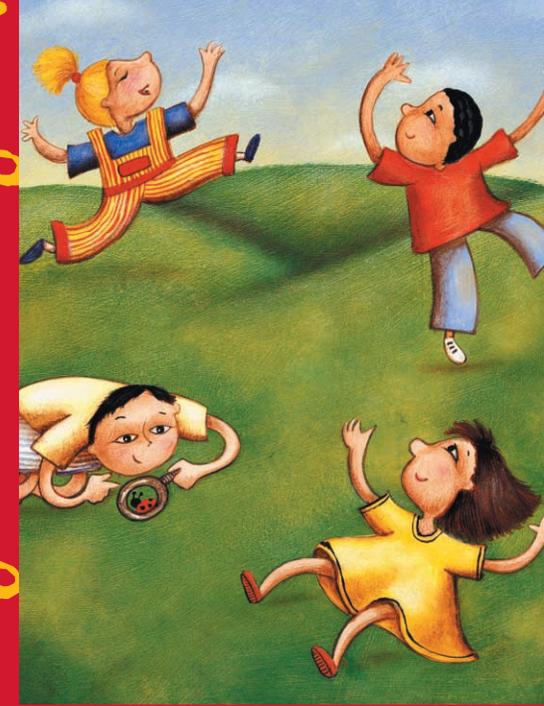
George Bernard Shaw

Proud Member of ASTRA
American Specialty Toy Retailing Association



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"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul."

Friedrich Froebel
"Father" of modern kindergarten

Leading the way through play

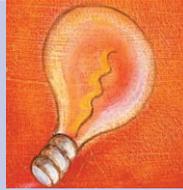
Leading the way through play

ASTRA

AMERICAN SPECIALTY TOY
RETAILING ASSOCIATION

Through Play

children practice, reinforce and remember what they are learning.



“(Children) have to play with what they know to be true in order to find out more, and then they can use what they learn in new forms of play.”

Fred Rogers

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood

Through Play

children learn to manage their emotions and conquer their anxieties.

“Play gives the child a safe space where she can experiment at will, suspending the rules and constraints of physical and social reality. In play, the child becomes master rather than subject.”

Alicia F. Lieberman

Author, *The Emotional Life of the Toddler*

Through Play

children inquire, imagine, process information, and think.

“It is language time... problem-solving time... It is memory time, planning time, investigating time. It is organization-of-ideas time, when the young child uses his mind and body and his social skills and all his powers in response to the stimuli he has met.”

James L. Hymes, Jr.

Child Development Specialist

Through Play children develop, mature, and grow.

“Play is the most significant tool for preparing (the child) for the future and its tasks.”

Bruno Bettelheim, Child Psychologist

ASTRA believes play is a child's most important work. Play is how children have fun, acquire skills, experience success, and build self-esteem. Through play children figure out the world and where and how they fit in.

ASTRA independent toy stores share a commitment to children and community. We're united in a common mission to provide creative, constructive playthings that enrich and empower children's lives. We believe fun and positive play helps children to realize their full potential and lead happy, productive lives that will benefit themselves, our communities and our future.

