



Buying commercial toys for 2-5yr olds

There are so many different toys out there to choose from! Where do you start? Children can learn many new ideas, words and concepts through play, so it's important to have toys that

encourage *learning opportunities* rather than just *entertainment*. You can maximize their learning opportunities by making play into a conversation with your child. Talk about what's happening and see where it leads!

A good question to ask is - how can I interact and play with my child using a particular toy? Here are a few commercial toys which I often recommend to parents:

- Puzzles (eg. animals, vehicles, body parts)

You could talk about where the animals live, do the vehicles drive on the road or fly, what different body parts are used for eg. we kick with our foot.

- Animal figurines

Talk about what the animals looks like, what they might like to eat, where could they live, what do they like doing.

- Blocks and cars

Talk about what you could build, is the car fast or slow, what happens at night when they all go to sleep.

- Simple board games (eg. matching or counting games)

Talk about colours and numbers.

- Toys for pretend play eg a tea set, a dump truck with people and rubbish, a baby and bath, a cash register, wooden food to chop

Extend on your child's ideas to help them learn about what happens in these different situations and what we could say.

- Playdough

Make different food, animals, letters etc.... Talk about the different characteristics of the objects eg. a cat needs a tail and ears.

- Stamps, stickers, pens, glue, paper etc...

Help your child come up with different ideas to create eg. under the sea, a rocket and the moon, a dragon, treasure chest

What can I do to help my child?

There are times where children will say "I'm bored" even though they have lots and lots of toys! Try some of these ideas to help alleviate the boredom:

- Instead of having all your child's toys out ready for them to play with, put some away in a cupboard. This way you can rotate their toys each week or month so they have a variety to choose from.
- Have some toys ready that are just for specific occasions. This way your child can look forward to playing with a specific toy eg. a certain toy is just for in the car, when you go to appointments, or on Sundays with Dad.
- When your child gets lots of new toys for their birthday or Christmas, let them unwrap them, but then put some away again for a week or two later.
- Have your child help pack up their own toys. This helps them to learn responsibility for their things, as well as learning where things belong.

If you're concerned about your child's speech or language development, contact a speech pathologist to discuss whether assessment for your child is indicated.



Marion Langdon
Paediatric Speech Pathologist

0402 070 299
kidsinthehillssp@gmail.com

PO Box 397, Ferny Hills DC Qld 4055
Ferny Fair Shopping Plaza
170 Patricks Rd, Ferny Hills

www.kidsinthehillsspeech.com
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