

## Top Ten Toy Tips

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Selecting a toy for a child with disabilities? Here are the questions that the play experts at the National Lekotek Center ask when choosing developmentally appropriate toys for differently-abled kids. Use these questions to guide you in make the right match between the child for whom you're buying and a toy.

1. **Multisensory appeal:** Does the toy respond with lights, sounds, or movements 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 disabilities 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 experiences 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?
9. **Safety and durability:** Does the toy fit the child's size and strength? Does it have moisture resistance? Is 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?

**For further assistance in choosing toys for kids of all abilities, contact the National Lekotek Center at 1-800-366-PLAY or [www.lekotek.org](http://www.lekotek.org).**