



Early Learning Initiative

National College of Ireland

***Parent Child Home
Programme (PCHP)***

Choosing **books** and **toys** for **Christmas**:

2 Golden Rules: No commercial endorsement
No batteries

Choosing Christmas presents for young children should be enjoyable, but all too often in these rushed times they become another chore. We want to help you avoid that and savour the time while you are in charge of choosing what your children will find under the tree.

Small children have no sense of value, so what you spend is of no material interest to them and some of the cheapest toys keep the children learning and playing happily for hours.

There are so many ways to choose books and toys that we decided to put them into themes for the various ages to make the choices easier. But you know your own children best, so this is a guide only.

Essential for all small children:

Stacking cups – never too old for them endless hours of enjoyment while they learn about colour, size (big, bigger, biggest etc.) , volume, cause and effect relationships. Excellent way to get a child to rise their hair in the bath!

Stocking stuffers:

Bubbles – helps strengthen the muscles we use to form words

Play doh – good for imagination and fine motor skills.

Crayons, paper and (safety) scissors (you can wait until they are three for the scissors) on hand

Balls – great way to get plenty of exercise – small balls work well for small hands, but bigger balls for little feet!

Mini themes:

Helping Babies who are learning to walk:

Toddle Waddle
Blocks in a cart
Any pull along toy

Spring theme for 18 months +

Slow Snail
Spot Goes to the Park
Counting in the Garden
Garden Set to grow cress or shamrocks or even just grass (works on a window sill)

Social Skills:

Tea Set
Tiger Came to Tea
The Doorbell Rang

Beginning critical thinking:

Monkey Puzzle
Opposite Puzzle
The Very Hungry Caterpillar
What comes next sequence puzzle

Working out the real world:

Going to the Doctor:

Visit to the Doctor
Medical Kit
Teddy Bear (s/he makes a very good patient)
My body
Head to Toe

Or going to bed/night time

Good Night Gorilla
Good Night Moon
Owl Babies
Can't you get to sleep Little Bear?

Shape, Space and Size

Bear in a Square
Shape Sorter Cube
Chunky Shapes Puzzle

Sort 'n Stack
Sort 'n Stack Blocks
Shapes

Older children love board games and toys that are easy to learn to play, make the youngest feel included, but take time to learn a strategy.

Dominoes
Rummikub
Monopoly
Snakes and Ladders
Scrabble

What children need is you – your time, your energy, your enjoyment of them!

Your are you child's first and best teacher – so enjoy your time together