

# TOY CHARACTERISTICS

All children regardless of ability need a variety of opportunities to playfully interact. Since toys are the child's tools for play, finding toys with features that make them appealing and usable by a child is a critical part of this effort. Toys alone are not enough; caregivers and peers as play partners promote new ways to play.

## Toy Characteristics

### Is the toy appealing?

- *What kind of response appeals most to the child?* Does the toy have bright colors or texture? Does it respond with lights, sound, movement and/or vibration? What does the toy feel like? Color, sound, texture, lights, smell and vibration add to the multi-sensory appeal of the toy.
- Is the toy potentially calming or stimulating to the child? Is simple or complex? Does it contain single or multi- sensory responses?

### How does the toy work?

- *Will the child understand how to use it?* Are there multiple parts/control areas to the toy? Are the parts/areas highlighted?
- Are multiple steps required? Are the toys reactions consistent and expected?

### Is it easy to use?

- *Will the child be able to interact with it?* Is it easy to pick up, hold and use?
- Does the toy have handles, knobs or pieces? Are they of an appropriate shape and size for the child? If not, can it be easily adapted?
- Can a variety of actions (e.g. holding, kicking, batting) be used to play with the toy?
- Does the toy require an appropriate amount of effort (e.g. force, number of rotations, etc.)?



### **Is the toy adjustable?**

- *Where does the child like to play?* Can it be used in different locations and positions, such as on a wheelchair tray and on the floor?
- *Can it adjust to the child's interests and abilities?* Are the toy's features (e.g. height, volume, level of difficulty, speed, etc.) adjustable?

### **Can the toy be played with in different ways?**

- *Can it be used in different ways across play stages?* Does the toy appeal to children at various developmental levels? Toys should encourage use in more than one way.
- Will the toy hold the child's interest, yet challenge her and promote new discoveries? Is it fun?

## TOY ACTIVITY

Consider the toy characteristics above. Describe the toy's features in the table below.

	Description	Child Use Y/N/modify
Appeal		
How it works		
Easy to Use		
Adjustable		
Different ways to play		
Other		

What play stage can the toy be used for?

- Sensory
- Functional
- Creative
- Constructive
- Pretend/Dramatic

**Apply this info to a particular child. How would you expect this child to play with this toy?**

**Adaptations**

There are many simple adaptations to assist a child in getting the most out of play. Ask the following questions to determine what further adaptations are needed:

- Can the child reach the toy? What can you do to bring it closer or extend certain parts?
- Would accenting or highlighting certain areas of the toy make them easier to locate?
- Would making the toy more stable help it stay in a certain position?
- Does the toy need to be confined so it stays within your child's reach?
- How can I make play more simple? More challenging?

**What adaptations might you use on this toy?**

**Play Strategies**

List three different ways that the toy can be used:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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