

## Holiday Gift Giving: Choosing toys for gift giving and learning!



During this giving season, consider giving a gift like games, books, puzzles, and crafts that encourage elementary age children to have fun through exploration and family interactions. Consider the following guidelines as you make choices for holiday giving.

### **1. Avoid the temptation to give "the hottest toys"**

Giving the latest and newest technology, video game, or toy can be tempting, but do they really promote an understanding of culture and the world? Be sure to look for a book, music CD, game, or craft to cultivate his or her curiosity.

### **2. Follow your child's interests**

Each child has his or her own way of learning. A toy that is great for one child may not be effective for another. Look for educational games that develop and encourage the child's interests. What does the child like? Reading? Geography? Science? Music? Writing? Math? Consider the child's interests when choosing a gift.

### **3. Choose toys that promote playing and family interaction**

Children learn from playing. Today's children spend a lot of time watching movies and television, playing the computer, and playing video games. Too much can neglects important skills in young children. When choosing a toy or game, ask yourself what skills does the toy or game promote?

Choose items that:

- expand positive self-esteem, values, understanding and cultural awareness
- offer practice in skill building
- promote eye/hand coordination, fine and large motor skills
- educate the child about the environment
- help kids express themselves and communicate with others
- develop imaginations through discovery

**4. Check museum catalogs and visit museum gift shops, which often have an area devoted to products geared to children.**

These are excellent places to find toys that stimulate curiosity and creativity.

**5. Pick toys that fit your budget and your values.**

Don't be worn down or made to feel guilty if everyone else on the block is buying the latest expensive video game. There are plenty of reasonably priced, high-quality alternatives that fit your values.

**6. Make sure it's fun!**

A toy or children's product is supposed to entertain the child. It should amuse, delight, excite and be enjoyable. No toy or game is going to keep your child's interest unless it is fun to play with, offers lasting play value, and puts a smile on his or her face.