



Gift Ideas for Children

Gift giving can be a difficult task with the pressure from the media to purchase popular items. Most parents want children to receive gifts that they will enjoy and will provide hours of fun. Many parents would also like gifts that in addition to being fun will also promote learning and development. Below are some non-violent, fun, and age appropriate gift ideas that will encourage growth and development of physical, intellectual, and social skills. Of course along with these gifts the most important thing in a child's life is a caring, and loving adult.

Infants

Soft and washable toys  
Squeaky toys  
Rattles  
Books (fabric or stiff paged)  
Variety of toys to mouth, and grasp  
Lightweight blocks  
Soft balls  
Recorded Music (lullabies & rhymes)  
Mobiles

Preschool and Kindergarten

Variety of picture books  
Puppets  
Sturdy cars and trucks  
Construction materials (blocks, legos, snap together)  
Puzzles  
Beads for stringing  
Dolls and accessories  
Art materials (paint, glue, scissors, paper, crayons, markers)  
Variety of balls  
Beanbags  
Pretend play toys (dishes, food, vacuum, wagon, doll stroller)  
Tricycles  
Games (lotto, bingo, matching, simple card games)

Toddlers

Books (stiff paged)  
Large Blocks  
Large toy cars & trucks  
Variety of recorded music (jazz, lullabies, classical)  
Large crayons and paper  
Dolls and accessories  
Shape sorters  
Puzzles with 3 – 5 pieces  
Large beads for stringing  
Musical instruments  
Stacking and nesting toys  
Push & pull toys  
Riding toys  
Toy telephones  
Variety of balls  
Pails and shovels  
Fill and dump toys



Gift Ideas for Kids to Make

[http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/gifts\\_kids\\_can\\_make.htm](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/gifts_kids_can_make.htm)

<http://dltk-holidays.com/xmas/gifts.htm>

<http://virginialynne.hubpages.com/hub/Gift-Ideas-on-a-Budget-Home-Made-Gifts>

<http://familyfun.go.com/christmas/homemade-christmas-gifts/christmas-gifts-kids-can-make/>

Six to Eight Year Olds

Books on topics of interest  
Small figurines for fantasy play  
Construction materials to build scenes and models  
Art materials  
Science kits  
Dramatic play materials for real-life activities (pretend money, cash register)  
Writing materials (pens, pencils, envelopes, paper, hole punch)  
Puzzles  
Games (beginning strategy games, reading, spelling, math, memory, problem solving)  
Riding toys with helmets & safety gear (bicycles, scooters)

Nine to Twelve Year Olds

Variety of books and games  
Sports and hobby related materials/equipment  
Music, video games, & movies (edited for appropriate language & content)  
Magazine subscription  
Bicycle, scooters, skateboards (with helmets and safety gear)  
Clothing and accessories  
Cool school supplies



## Shoe Box Gifts for hours of creative play

Usually, giving gifts to children means buying manufactured toys at a store. Here is an alternative gift idea that you can easily put together. Shoe box gifts are collections of small, familiar items that are organized around a play theme and presented in an appealing way. They also show that expensive toys in fancy packages aren't necessarily the best. The process of putting together such an easy, yet imaginative and age-appropriate gift for a special child in your life can be very satisfying for you, too.

### Making Shoe Box Gifts

- Decorate an empty shoe or appropriate-sized box and lid (gift wrap, stickers, etc.).
- Choose a theme and put a clear label on the box which includes both a simple word and picture of the theme.
- Most of the items we suggest are found at hardware stores, pharmacies, stationery stores, art/crafts stores, supermarkets.
- Use small containers, ziplock sandwich bags, or build dividers with small pieces of cardboard to make compartments for the various items in the shoe box. Young children appreciate organization—being able to return everything to its place.
- Most of these suggestions are appropriate and safe for children to use independently; however, objects in some kits may require adult supervision and/or aid (e.g., food coloring).

### Shoe Box Gift Theme Ideas: Use these or create your own.

#### STORY BOX

- favorite children's book
- cassette recording of adult narrating story
- cassette player
- headphones
- story characters (small plastic figures, puppets, stuffed animal)
- blank journal for creating original stories

#### SHOE BOX GARDEN

- plastic-lined shoe box
- potting soil
- seed packets
- small watering can
- popsicle sticks
- garden tools
- gardening gloves

#### NATURE EXPLORER

- nature guides with pictures of birds, trees, woodland animals
- small sketch book and colored pencils
- binoculars
- plastic magnifying glass
- camera (toy or real)
- vest or small backpack with pockets
- small ziplock bags
- bag of bird seed

#### RESCUE/FIRST AID

- flashlight
- bandaids
- fabric strips/ bandages
- ace bandage
- sling
- eye patch
- gauze
- stethoscope
- surgical mask

#### BLOCK PROP BOX

- small recycled boxes
- wood/dowels cut in various sizes
- paper towel tubes
- scrounge materials: old keys, plastic bottle tops, buttons, fabric scraps
- for sign making:*
  - cardboard
  - construction paper
  - tape
  - marker
  - index cards / post-its

#### PLAYDOUGH

- buy a can of playdough or make your own
- garlic press
- plastic knife
- popsicle sticks
- wooden dowel
- plastic lids
- small tray/plate
- buttons/beads
- plastic animals

#### PLAYDOUGH RECIPE

- 1 cup flour
- 1 Tbsp. oil
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 tsp. cream of tartar
- food coloring

- Mix ingredients in saucepan.
- Cook on low heat. Stir constantly until playdough pulls away from sides of pan.
- Scoop playdough onto wax paper. Knead until smooth.
- Store in airtight container.

**BEYOND SHOE BOXES**

Recycle large boxes that can be painted/decorated for dramatic play. Create a car, spaceship, animal, creature, house or cave. Extend the play possibilities by adding blocks, flashlight, tablecloth and/or pillows.

*Materials:*

- appliance box
- paint, tape, markers
- wallpaper books to decorate and glue
- utility knife (for adults to cut holes)
- carpet samples