Step-by-Step Buying Guide: Kids Items

You’re here because you need to buy something for a kid. Whether it's your own kid, a niece, a nephew, a birthday party for some kid you've only just heard of, it can be hard to choose what type of item to purchase. With all of the information available on the internet, you may become overwhelmed at the task which can make it even harder to choose.

So, you’re undecided and maybe even a bit confused. Which is the best choice for you? Which is the best choice for the kid?

My step-by-step buying guide, will draw your attention to the most noteworthy qualities that children's items ought to possess for theirs and their parent's benefit. These points should help you to focus on what you truly need so that you can make the best purchase for yourself and the young ones around you.

Ease of Use

Your kid gets a new item for their birthday and it comes with set up instructions that are a mile long. Guess who gets that daunting task? You. The parent. Numero Uno of kid toy construction chaos. Why is it you who always gets this tedious task? Plain and simple, the instructions say so - “Adult assembly required.”

Kids like to stick with the KISS rule - Keep It Simple, Silly - and the people who design stuff for children know that. This is why, after you’ve gone through the painstaking process of building whatever it is that your child simple must have the latest and greatest, it is SUPER EASY to use! That is, if it’s been designed right.

Your kid just wants to use their new item and if they are unable to do so, readily, due to the difficulty or complexity of use, then they’ll quickly become [bored of using it](https://artfulparent.com/6-ways-to-encourage-continued-interest-in-your-childrens-easel/). So, in order to overcome this potential challenge, take a look at some reviews before purchasing, watch other children interact with the item on YouTube videos, or just take a closer look at the item descriptions to really understand how the child will be using the item once its configured.

Storage

Kids are walking catastrophes. They make a mess everywhere they go; we know this. We also know that it has been scientifically proven that [messy play is beneficial to a child’s development](https://schoolhouse-daycare.co.uk/news/why-messy-play-benefits-children/). So, when you are choosing an item for a kid to use and play with, don't shy away from something that might get a little bit untidy.

Fortunately, good quality, child-friendly items have kept this in mind when they were being designed. Most come with features meant to prevent excessive disorder and if they don’t then it’s time to consider your options. Having built-in storage and/or locked down accessories is a fantastic way that designers have managed to rein in the chaos. However, not all quality items come with these features and that could prove to be disastrous. If your child can’t easily find the items that they want to use then they may become disinterested or frustrated with the item which will cause them to stop using it or, worse, they'll tear apart the house trying to find it!

To eliminate this problem, look for something that comes with integrated storage space or limited detachable items that could easily become lost and/or broken. Having a designated spot for any loose items will also help to keep small parts away from intruding fingers who might not be quite ready to explore that activity just yet.

Multi-Function

Even if you give a kid something as simple as a stick, they will find more than a million ways to use it. With this in mind, many child-friendly items come with an array of different functions. This is fantastic but it also gives a little bit of food for thought; mainly, is it necessary?

In some instances, the multifunctionality of a child’s item will act as guidance in use, as is the case with most [kid’s easels](https://bestforthekids.com/best-easels/) which often have a magnetic, white board side as well as a paper holding, chalkboard side. Other items are vaguer in their uses like building block type materials which are ideal for children who want to experiment with a variety of different tools in a variety of different ways. Having the opportunity to learn from an item the child is interacting with is always a bonus functionality in my books!

It’s good to know what style of use (guided or exploratory) would suit the disposition of the child in question. It is also important to consider the situation in which the item would be used, whether or not experimental play would be acceptable or if structure is required.

* NOTE: Many (most) multi-functioning children’s items *make noise*! Please be sure that this is the type of item that you want to have sound off constantly, repetitively, and maddeningly. If you are not the parent, please ask if a noisy item is an acceptable purchase for their kids.

Durability

Kids aren't exactly careful with the things they use on a day-to-day basis; mindfulness is a skill developed with practice and experience which is something children’s minds simply haven’t had the opportunity to develop.

Your kid’s things are inevitably going to withstand some bumps and bruises over the years and you don't want to be going out to buy new things every time this happens. Generally speaking, you usually get what you pay for. Over the long-term, it’s more affordable to initially spend a bit more on something that’s built to last.

When buying something with a kid in mind, look for quality materials and properly thought-through designs. These are items that can last a lifetime, if looked after properly, and this is a feature that you, your pocketbook, and your child will appreciate.

Safety

Kids inadvertently get into trouble All. The. Time. So, let’s not surround them with items that encourage them to do so more easily. Keep age and ability in mind when purchasing new items and always monitor play at all times.

What’s great about choosing a safe product for children is that, as long as you’ve carefully considered the above-mentioned points, you are likely to find a product that will keep your child out of danger and set your mind at ease while they play.

Cost

Last, but most certainly not least: Is this thing within my price range. This is a highly personal question to consider but, let’s be honest, it matters.

Some questions to consider: How well do I (does my kid) know this kid? How old is he/she? How many others will be giving them something? What does my budget look like right now? What did I give to others who this child might know? Are there any alternatives that I could give - like an experience rather than an item - that might be appreciated more?

All of these things play a role in how costly of an item you choose to purchase and shouldn’t be considered lightly. They may save you quite a bit more than a buck or two.

The Gift of Giving

Now that you’ve had the chance to consider many of the qualities that make or break the value of a kid’s item, you can go out and get whatever it is that will brighten the day of a little child.

*The most beautiful thing in the world is a child’s smile. The next best thing? Knowing that you are the reason behind it.*

-- childinsider.com