

Conscious Creative Courageous LIVING WITH CHILDREN

Grandma & Grandpa's Perfectly Possible Present List

Children will benefit most from presents which encourage healthy, active activity and play (not those that are merely entertaining). Fewer gifts made of higher quality materials, (not cheap plastic which breaks easily) can encourage more enjoyment, appreciation and careful use.

Some of these presents can be bought but others might be better homemade. Homemade presents have a lot more love in them and teach children about initiative, creativity and self-sufficiency – qualities often lost in a consumer society. See separate article for more information on these 'Love gifts'.

Ideas for gifts for younger children

- * Dolls' clothes, sheets, blankets, beds. Knitted clothes are wonderfully flexible.
- * Small knitted animals for block play.
- * Small wooden animals for block play (e.g. home carved, or explore third world goods shops, specialist Steiner shops).
- * Solid wooden trucks etc for carrying and "working" with.
- * Interesting shaped blocks for curved bridges and walls (eg cut out of logs and sanded).
- * Special shells, stones, crystals, nuts, cones.
- * Play cloths of soft cotton dyed in soft rainbow colours.
- * Silky materials or soft cotton for dancing /dress ups. Cut a hole in the centre of a square for the head, hem and thread elastic into it. Also put elastic in two opposite corners to loop around the wrist.
- * Lengths of coloured silk for dress ups and other play (approx 1.5 metres).
- * Play pool for water play.
- * Buckets, pieces of hose, plastic tubing, funnels for water play.
- * Sand and sleepers for a sand pit. Sieve, old spoons, saucepans for sand play.
- * Camping shovel or geologists spade. Adult rake with cut down handle.
- * Small wheelbarrow or pull cart.
- * Small gardening tools - trowels, forks, hoes.
- * Bulbs, seedlings, seeds to plant.
- * Adult broom with cut down handle. Dustpan and small banister brush.
- * Light weight but real carpentry tools (not toys) - hammer, saw, nails, pliers, screwdriver, screws and wood.
- * Proper baking tools - medium sized wooden rolling pin, metal biscuit cutters, ginger bread man cutter, jelly moulds, chocolate/carob moulds.
- * Blackboard.
- * Good quality crayons and pencils which allow the colour to flow smoothly onto the paper. (Try bees wax crayons (Stockmar) and artist quality pencils.)
- * Good quality watercolour paints (where the colours are pure, not muddy), soft brushes, large cartridge paper, drawing pads etc.
- * Craft materials. Small homemade kits of materials can be made up for the child to make simple things with felt, wool, beads,

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embroidery thread etc. Ready-made kits of many different crafts are available.

- * Good quality story books with beautiful illustrations.
- * Stilts (for over six years).
- * Ropes, long (for group) and short (individual) for skipping, building, pulley systems.
- * Wee Willie Winkie candle stick with handle. Candle snuffer. For bed times and special times.
- * Special experiences with grandparents - an air flight, boat trip, steam engine ride, zoo or museum visit, puppet show, music concert, local community events.
- * Percussion/musical instruments of teaching quality from music stores and third world goods stores (e.g. Oxfam): triangle, drum, xylophone, whistles, indigenous people's instruments etc. Note: if instruments that are meant to be in tune are not in tune, (for example cheap toy instruments.) avoid giving these to children.
- * Personal stories from grandpa/grandma's childhood. Preferably happy memories for little ones. They can be written out, or made into a book so they can be told over and over. Even better with illustrations or photos.

Ideas for gifts for older children

- * Materials for building with: timber, ropes, rope ladders.
- * Good quality camping gear: tents, cooking utensils for gas and open fire, torch, bedding, sleeping bags, rucksack etc.
- * Good quality sports equipment and inside games.
- * Good quality literature/books. Don't forget books suitable for reading together regularly in an ongoing way as a family, or just with you.
- * Reference books, illustrated books on nature.
- * Magnifying glass, microscope, compass, gadgets for exploring the world! (Try the Australian Geographic Shop for ideas.)
- * Good quality art material items: paint, paper, brushes, pencils, sketch books, carving sets, craft kits, etc. according to the interests of the child.
- * Special cultural experiences: theatre, dance, opera, music, special events, a restaurant meal – especially food from other cultures.
- * "Presents from the past". Family memorabilia or heirlooms (little things!), family tree, copies of old photographs of great-great, great and grandparents. Family history is more appreciated after 11 or 12 years, but 9 and 10 year olds love to hear the stories and see photos of themselves as little children..."What you did when you were one..."
- * Board/card games that encourage spending time with family or friends, that encourage imagination, working together, questions and conversation.

Other articles of interest on the website

Lovegifts Ideas for presents made by ourselves with love for those we love.