



## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

### Selecting Toys

Families living with autism spectrum disorder often look for tips on how to handle the many different challenges that may arise. “Real Life Tips for Kids with Autism” is a series of practical videos and resources presented by the experts at Children’s Specialized Hospital.

When selecting toys for children with autism you want them to be fun, but you want to keep safety in mind too. Many children with autism like to put things in their mouth, so you want to stay away from toys that smash when dropped, break easily, or have many small pieces as these can be choking hazards.

So you want to choose toys that appeal to their senses. It’s common for children with autism to have sensory challenges. Toys can be a great way to introduce sensory experiences in a fun, non threatening way. So some ideas are: containers filled with rice or beans, any kind of tactile feeling, slime, putty, or clay, water tables, sand tables are great. Some other ideas are books with cloth or yarn, things that children can feel. These are all great ideas. Children with autism may not like these types of sensory toys at first. It may take some time for them to have fun with the toys.

You want to keep a child’s developmental age in mind versus their chronological age. You don’t necessarily have to go by the recommended age on the box of a toy. Less complicated toys for children who have lower functioning autism, such as simple push button, open close, or cause and effect toys, are best. For higher functioning children with autism, you want to use toys that help them to build things, create things, discover new things and to connect with their peers.

When selecting toys for children with autism it’s best to keep it simple and just have a few options. A room full of toys can be overwhelming and cause over stimulation for a child with autism. Toys are a great way for children with autism to socialize with their peers. You can look to more typical toys for this, toys that their peers will be familiar with, such as interactive video games and board games. When playing toys with children with autism you may have to play with a toy multiple times before the child really enjoys playing with the toy.

So some children with autism prefer more physical activities and physical toys while others prefer more sedentary toys. It’s important to expose children to both of them and have an equal balance between them both. It may be hard for children with autism to have fun with toys at the beginning, but keep working at it. Get together with family and friends and just have fun with it.

I have a hard time finding toys for my son and I look to a lot of different people for help, but when I find that toy that he likes and we play with it and we just have fun together, it's the best thing. Even my son's ten and I'm still always kind of looking and he doesn't have a lot of language so I feel like a detective in that I'm always trying to figure out what is going to be appealing to him and what's going to be fun and what he is going to enjoy.

You want to choose toys that are interesting to your child. You can consider asking your child's therapist, or teachers for recommendations, there's also a lot of really great recommendations online. If you go to the Children's Specialized Hospital website, there are many recommendations there. Other online retailers have the information as well.



Through a partnership with Kohl's Cares, Children's Specialized Hospital is improving access to care for children with special health care needs.



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