

Toys! Toys! Toys! (and more)

Finding toys that are appropriate and fun for a child with SMA is always difficult. Here are a few suggestions from parents.

If you have any ideas about toys for kids with SMA - things you have found to work - or links which are especially appropriate for kids with physical disabilities - PLEASE share them! Email colleen@fsma.org

Infants and older

Mirrors - large plexiglas (unbreakable) ones are available from glass suppliers, not too expensive (good for understanding his/her own body)

Christmas tree decorations (not always safe for babies - choking hazard - but usually light-weight)

Crib gym that hangs low enough for a weak child to touch

Light rattles

Wrap a gift in foil or mylar gift wrap - it is light, makes a noise, reflects light.

Night-light which shows characters on the ceiling

Mylar helium filled balloons

Fisher-Price vibrating phone with very light detachable receiver

Teething blankets and bibs

Fisher Price Musical Fish Tank

Single-finger finger puppets in lightweight fabrics and bright colors, also sock-type rattles for feet

Glittery, lightweight toys

Puppets (for adult to work, not child)

Fisher Price Musical "Fish Tank"

Wind chimes - hung within reach

Curling ribbon wrapped around a straw

Rattle - put small beans in an empty syringe cover with lid, decorate with stickers

One - Two - Three Year Olds ('Toddlers') and older

Playdough - sometimes home-made is softer than commercial (also Therapy Putty, which is very expensive but softer)

Crayola Model Magic modeling material - very light compared to other doughs

Cookie dough too!

Large crawl tubes (or cardboard boxes) to encourage crawling (type 2-3)

Light musical toys - whistles, xylophones, flutes, harmonicas, Barney banjo, Ring-Around-Bells, bird-call makers, etc. (these are great therapy as well as fun!)

Blowing bubbles

Connect Four game (small version provides training in pincer grasp)

Videos which feature kids in wheelchairs: ElmoCize, some episodes of Magic School Bus, Boundless Playgrounds video (www.boundlessplaygrounds.org)

Marbleworks (Discovery Toys) (type 2)

Ping-pong balls, styrofoam balls (large ones are available from from a craft store)

Foam or plastic figures which stick on the side of a bathtub

Shaving cream or whipped cream (sensory development)

Fisher-Price little people or other small figures, small plastic animals

Finger paints

Matchbox cars

Wooden puzzles with peg handles

Supportive swings

Feathers

Small boats (anything that floats that a child can blow) in a Tupperware bowl

Sand in a large deep rectangular plastic tub - child sits in corner, as in corner chair

Refrigerator magnets

Fisher-Price school bus with wheelchair

Koosh balls

Touch screen for computer (try <http://www.touchwindow.com/>)

Magnetic games (for example, the metal shavings on a face game)

Elmo's computer phone CD (mouse not necessary)

Paint with water books

Sand table with birdseed instead of sand (easier clean-up)

Bowling off the stander tray (angled down) into a laundry basket (light balls)

Toots the Train by Fisher Price (voice activated)

Sega Pico Learning System software (3+ years - type 2)

Mozart Blocks by Neurosmith

Pottery Barn Kids Fabric Tea Set and Fabric Dollhouse

Press & Dress Dolls from Pockets of Learning Company

Fisher Price Country Home portable dollhouse

Push and Ride toys (Little Tykes)

Desk/bench areas with no drawers or leg obstructions underneath to enable easy power chair access

'Lazy Susan' roundabout or turntable for Scrabble game - put a collection of toys or a train on it, child can turn it for easy reaching

Prism Glasses (or bedspecs) - not a toy, these enable a person to see a room while lying down

Blo-Pens or Textras - messy and fun, good exercise for the lungs too

Elefun game

Polly Pockets, Jo Jo Circus and Disney figurines - these are small and light enough to fit right in the hand

Sit-n-Spin disc toy



Preschoolers and older

Simple board games with light pieces, like Hi-Ho Cherry-O (Parker Brothers) or A-B-Seas (Discovery Toys)

Markers (easier to use than crayons)

Stickers

Push Tricycles - by Puky, Fisher Price, others (will require adaptation, for strong type 2+)

Playmobil figures (wheelchair available in hospital set)

Adaptive scissors - stationary, loop, spring-type

Paints

Wikki Stix

Play station built in a 'C' shape to accommodate wheelchair- for doll house, etc

Lite-Brite (assist with punching holes in paper if necessary)

Software such as JumpStart Toddler (requires only mouse movement, not clicking)

Trackball for computer (instead of mouse, it's easier)

Stamps, self inking or with pads

Micro machines cars

Transformers (some are stiff, some easy - sometimes used ones are best)

Wheelchair chalk - fit it power chair to enable sidewalk drawing as the child 'drives the picture' (could also be done with chalk dust in a bag with a hole; available from hardware stores)

"Little Fingers" Child sized keyboard with built-in trackball

Loving Family Sweet Streets (by Fisher Price) or Polly Pocket dolls and playsets - pieces are small and lightweight, huge collection of toys available

Fisher Price Sand and Water Table - try this family's modification if your child uses a power chair: We modified the table to make it taller for Joshua to reach. My husband got some PVC pipe a little larger than the original "legs" of the sand table. He cut the pipe into four equal pieces. Then he just slipped the new longer PVC legs over the original legs, and it is now the perfect height for Joshua's wheels! Joshua just loves this!!! It was a really easy and inexpensive modification to make!

Aidan Assist - Fisher Price rescue hero - paramedic in wheelchair

Playstation2 game Eye Toy with camera - child sits in front of it and can see self on TV, all upper body/arms/hands movements - no joysticks or hand held controls; one game is simply bubbles or balloons covering up the screen, child moves arms around to wipe soap away see self on screen; many games come with the Eye Toy

V-Tech V-Smile video game - a mom says: "the controller has very easy push buttons and a joystick that moves just as easy as the one on his wheelchair. He loves it because now he can play video games just like all the other kids his age (5 years)"

V-Tech Fly and Learn Globe

Bob the Builder Click Bricks

Magnetix



School Age Children and Older

Wheelchair to fit doll (American Girl and My Twinn dolls have these as may others)

Barbie in a wheelchair (look for paralympic Becky complete with racing wheelchair)

Rokenbok toys (like a Nintendo set with remote control cars and much more)

Bey Blades (light Japanese tops, some have electric spinner; suitable for type 2)

Video games

Room decorations which can be attached to the ceiling

Pen and tablet computer interface (such as Wacom Graphire2)

Wham-o Balzac Balloon Balls

Soccer cones to make an obstacle course outside

Power Soccer ball - see article on Power Soccer and website <http://www.powersoccerusa.net/>

Plasma Car - available from FSMA load cupboard, suitable for a child who can sit unsupported

Gel ballpoint pens - roll easier than markers or regular ballpoint

Lego Mindstorms Robots

Bulls-Eye Ball from Tiger Games

Thank you very much to all the parents who sent ideas! Keep them coming!

Links about toys:

AblePlay - <http://www.ableplay.org/> - ratings and detailed reviews from National Lekotek professionals on loads of toys and other play products, product information categorized by disability category, insightful play ideas for each toy, upcoming online forums share experiences and provide personal advice

Beyond Play - <http://beyondplay.com/> - early intervention products and toys; free catalog

Discovery Toys - <http://www.discoverytoysinc.com/> -- very high quality toys, some suitable for special needs. If you order through Representative Linda Wright, a portion of the proceeds benefits FSMA. Contact Linda at dtlinda@attbi.com for details.

Dragonfly Toys for Children with Special Needs - <http://www.dragonflytoys.com/> -- Search function allows you to look for suitable toys based on age and ability.

Dr. Toy -- <http://www.drtoy.com/> -- not especially about toys for disabled children, but there is extensive information about all kinds of toys with high "play quality"

Enabling Devices -- <http://www.enablingdevices.com/> -- adaptive toys, special switches and switch operated toys, etc.

Datadesk -- <http://www.datadesktech.com/> - "Little Fingers" child sized keyboard

Kids on Wheels - http://kidsonwheels.cc/index_parents.cfm - book and website for kids and adults contains more ideas

Don Johnson Resources -- <http://www.donjohnston.com> -- Discover Switch puts full keyboard and mouse functions on the computer screen. Slow, but works well for children/adults with very little movement.

Lekotek -- <http://www.lekotek.org/> -- resource centers for accessible play

Pocket Full of Therapy -- <http://www.pfot.com/> -- occupational therapy products, toys and ideas