

## Toys and Technology

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### Abstract

The intention of this paper is to show the specific of toys as main tools of a children's play. Functions and characteristics of toys are presented. It is indicated that the good toys should be open for various actions and the ideas of the child. However the majority of modern toys are equipped with technical devices which don't allow the child to show his/her own activity. Playing with such toys comes down to a putting buttons that unlike a pretend play doesn't develop the abilities in the child. Tech toys, and electronic games present a new developmental situation and it is necessary to study the impact this kind of activities have on the development of young children. In the end of the article the importance of psychological examination of toys is shown.

**Keywords:** Play; Imaginary Situation; Traditional Toys; Tech Toys; Child Development; Child's Activity; Psychological examination of toys

### Introduction

Toy is the most traditional cultural tool created by adults to enhance children's activity. Toys are the main objects of child' play and own independent actions. To remain being media [1], toys should not impose themselves nor suggest concrete actions. So toys ought primarily *to be open to the different actions and emotions of the child*. A good toy should leave *room for the child's representations* and enable children to generate their own ideas and feeling, so it should be open to play [2]. Meanwhile, modern toys are becoming self-sufficient things meant to evoke surprise, admiration or curiosity. Instead of stimulating children to play, such toys encourage them to consume toy qualities and soon lead to satiety. Whenever toys have intricate technological equipment and impose certain modes of acting, they inhibit not only imagination in children, but also their inner psychological life. Our studies showed qualitative

differences in playing with traditional and technological toys. A "program" embedded in technological interactive toys reduces the initiative and variety of play actions, speech activity of children and their interaction. The replacement of rudimentary toys for technological «toys», like IPAD, IPOD and others electronic devices, could carry fundamental changes in the mental development of children. The interaction with these toys is limited to repeated actions that stimulate a narrow range of stereotype movement. By making the task easier for children and confining their play to monotonous movements, it limits their capacities for independent meaningful actions, imagination, self expression and therefore inhibits their development. As it was shown in the studies, a replacement traditional children's play for electronic has being related to an increase in behavioral problems in young children. They show difficulties in self-regulation, attention deficits and impulsivity,

inappropriate emotional expressions and interaction with others.

Toys ought primarily to be open to the different actions and emotions of the child. Toys should make it possible for children to impart their own activity – their voices and movements - to it. To remain being media, toys should not impose themselves nor suggest concrete actions. Only this way can toys become psychological media rather than merely an object of manipulations.

A toy on itself does not directly influence a child's development, but it mediates the activity of a child, developing all the human mental functions (attention, thinking, feeling, and others). In fact, it is difficult to say, for example, what a doll develops - attention, feelings, social skills, or anything else. Therefore, we evaluate the development potential not of a toy but of a play action with it. A toy as an object of children's play (or activity tool) determines the character of play, inspiring the direction and possible variations of play. In other words, toys support a child's actions. To enhance the developmental functions of a toy, it should suggest adequate and culturally consistent guidelines for a child's play action, leading the child towards what should be done with it and how to encourage the child to realize the toy's potential. Suggestions for children's self-initiated actions and their clearness for the child are two indispensable qualities of all developmental toys. Indications for activities with the toys may be more or less open, inviting rigid activity or allowing a child's initiative.

Play and toy Centre Moscow State University of Psychology and Education is to develop concepts and methods of examining toys and to evaluate the developmental qualities of concrete toys. This examination is based on Vygotskian theory – on the possibility for toys to become a real psychological tool. Psychological and pedagogical evaluation of toys, take into account not only their hygienic or aesthetics properties, but the potential psychological effect on child's development [3,4].

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