

Closed Ended Toys and Activities

Closed ended toys have a clear beginning and a clear end point. You child finishes playing with the toy, then moves on to another activity. They teach task completion and the patience to see things through to the end. Closed ended toys and activities build attention. They may also assist in developing other skills, such as eye-hand coordination and turn taking. Here are some examples:

Puzzles

These can range from small peg puzzles to giant floor puzzles. They teach children to pay attention to details. To solve them, children have to observe colors and shapes.

Cooking

Children can bake with their parents, helping to measure ingredients and learning to follow recipes. They can make their favorite smoothie.

Sorting

There are so many types of sorting. Children can play with shape sorters. Or they can sort household objects by shape, color or style.

Craft Activities

Children can complete the instructions to create something new.

Building Sets

There are so many to choose from. A child can make a car, a robot or a castle.

Mazes

There are mazes on paper or 3-D versions. They all teach concentration.

Beads

Children can string beads on ribbons or pipe cleaners. They can make patterns using color, shape or size.

Lacing Cards

These teach coordination and concentration.

Colouring and Activity Books

These come in many styles and level of complexity.

Games

Bingo and other matching games are a great way to model turn taking and develop attention.

Don't forget to look for things around the home to create closed-ended activities. Children can sort beans into egg cartons. You can draw a pattern and have your child copy it with playing cards. Pinterest is a great resource for ideas.

Open Ended Toys and Activities

Open ended toys and activities do not have a definite end point. They don't come with detailed directions and it isn't always clear what a child needs to do. Open ended toys and activities promote pretend play and encourage curiosity and creativity. They can foster decision making, problem solving, language and expand social play. There's no time limit to this type of play. Here are some examples:

Puppets, Dolls, Stuffedies and Action Figures

There are so many ways to pretend with these toys. Feed them, bathe them, cover them with a blanket and give them a nap. Do a puppet show.

Doll Houses and Play Sets

There are many kinds of these sets, for example, firehouses, castles, schools, and camper vans.

Toy Dishes, Play Food and Kitchen Sets

Children can pretend to bake, build a pizza, have a tea party or run a restaurant. They can pretend to feed themselves or others.

Cars and Other Vehicles

Race them against each other, wash them, repair them, park them in the garage, drive them to the park – the possibilities are endless.

Costumes and Props

There are so many possible uses for items such as toy phones, hats, computer bags, trench coats and feather boas. There are great costumes to buy. Or take some material and drape it around you child's shoulders to make a superhero cape.

Colouring and Crafts

Grab some paints, crayons, and paper, or maybe a whiteboard and markers. Try creating a collage with magazines. Children can use these for hours of creative fun.

Blocks, K'Nex, Lego

Your child can use their imagination to create whatever they wish – a tower, a space ship or a dinosaur.

Animal Figures

These come in many types, for example, forest, ocean, jungle and farm.

Train Sets

Build the track and create some fun. Load the cars with small toys and go on a journey.

Play Tent or Blanket Fort

Children can set these up in the house or outside.

Play Dough

Children can use this to squish, roll, shape, and create.

Veterinarian, Doctor or Carpenter Play Sets

Children can pretend with their stuffies or their friends.

Don't forget that there are great open ended toys and activities to be found around the home. Use recyclables like cardboard tubes and yogurt tubs. A cardboard box can become so many things. Use plastic spoons and bowls from the kitchen. Use stones, pinecones and sticks to build and create outside!