
Educational Toys Help Kids With Special Needs

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All children love having time to play with toys. It is essential to their growth and development. However, for kids with special needs, playing with educational toys is vital to helping them feel in control of their environment and increasing their ability to problem solve. Sometimes, play time is all that is accomplished in a special needs classroom and through that playtime comes important lessons and one on one time. Having the right type of toys in a classroom for special needs kids is essential. It is estimated that over 4 million children have some type of disability that affects their learning. Improvements in diagnosis methods have allowed pediatricians and other professionals to determine at a much younger age what help a child may need. This means that more and more classrooms and teachers that cater specifically to special needs children are becoming available to parents.

Educational professionals agree that for these types of wooden educational toys become one of the most important ways for them to work on hand-eye coordination, social interaction, fine motor skills and gross motor skills.

In this situation, you don't have to focus on what toys are considered age appropriate. Toys should be chosen based on developmental level not age.

Even older special needs children can benefit from basic toys such as

blocks, mirrors, and balls of all sizes. They help children work on these all important skills. The more research that is done concerning special needs, the more it is clear that another important aspect of learning for special needs children is sensory play. Toys like textured balls, sand and water tables, and lacing boards can help children feel calm and comforted by touching. These simple toys help keep children connected to the world around them and can open them up to learning new things.

One challenge teachers have is finding the balance in providing sensory opportunities without over stimulating a special needs child. One study showed that children with Autism retained more information when it was presented to them while they were using their sense of touch. For example, simply teaching while a child is running their fingers through sand can enhance the learning opportunity without over stimulating them. Some special needs children have trouble sitting for any period of time in order to focus on a lesson. For these children, it is recommended that they be given the opportunity to sit on toys that will provide a constant motion. This can be calming for many children, especially those with various levels of Autism. Toys such as sitting disks and rocking seats allow children to keep moving while at least remaining in a seated position. Teaching a child with special needs can be a challenge, but there are so many helpful toys available. By making many of these toys available in the classroom, children can be stimulated and challenged in areas that need the most development. For parents of special needs children, these toys can help enhance learning at home as well.

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