The best toys encourage your toddler to learn, explore and use his imagination. They don’t have to be fancy or expensive.

**Household items**
- plastic bowls for filling and dumping
- pillows for climbing and making caves
- old clothes for dress-up
- the bath for supervised water play

**Classics**
- blocks
- dump trucks
- stuffed animals
- play food
- garages and farms
- books

**Nature’s toys**
- dirt and sand
- water
- stones

**Safer Toys**
Reduce overall injuries by:
- ensuring toys are well-made and fit your child’s age
- not using toys with broken, sharp or loose pieces
- ensuring your toy box lid can’t trap your toddler inside or slam down on him
- making sure paint is non-toxic and not peeling
- reading the safety information on toy labels
- avoiding toys with small batteries and making sure your toddler doesn’t take out any batteries

**TRY THIS**
See if the toy fits through a toilet paper roll. If it does, it’s too small.

Reduce strangling hazards by:
- not using toys with strings, cords or ribbons more than 15 cm (6 inches) long
- being careful with things like pull toys and skipping ropes

Reduce suffocation hazards by:
- making sure that any toy that your toddler can climb into has a way out and air holes
- taking away all packaging from new toys

**BE AWARE**
Almost half of toy-related deaths are caused by choking.

Reduce choking hazards by:
- avoiding any toy that fits in your toddler’s mouth
- making sure all toys are at least 3 1/2 cm (1 1/2 inches) wide and 6 cm (2 1/2 inches) long
- not letting your child play with things that can break into pieces, like styrofoam and egg cartons
- not letting him suck or chew on balloons

**FAMILY STORY**
We worried about how to keep our toddler away from her 7-year-old brother’s small toys. He decided to play with them in his own room. We put a gate on the door so his sister wouldn’t feel shut out.