

Design Resource

Indian Toys

Toys for children

by

Seema Periwal and Prof. Ravi Poovaiah

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/indian-toys>



1. Introduction
2. Cognitive Toys
3. Physical Toys
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<https://dsource.in/resource/indian-toys/introduction>

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Introduction

Play is an integral part of every childhood. It is essential for child's development and for learning life skills. Play is how children learn to have fun, to socialize, to think, to solve problems and to work. Play connects children with their imagination, their environment, and the people around them. Toys are tools children use in play. It impacts the learning and development of children. Toys of value enhance a child's natural ability to engage in imaginative and meaningful play. Toys vary across countries, cultures, and families.

Toys can be categorized into various groups, depending on the part of the child it helps to stimulate like Sensory Toys, Communicative Toys, Cognitive Toys and Physical toys. Here we will discuss the classic toys of India. We have divided the toys into these four broad categories.

Indian Toys are made of various kinds of materials like wood, cloth, bamboo, metal, paper, plastic, clay, rubber, coir, papier-mache, shells etc. Lacquered wooden toys from Channapatna village in **Karnataka**, Kondapalli in Andhra Pradesh, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Sawantawadi in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra are well known all over the world. Intricately carved walnut wood toys of Kashmir are in demand worldwide. Stuffed hanging cloth toys in vibrant colors are made in many parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Bamboo toys are primarily made in Assam, Tripura and parts of West Bengal. Shell toys from Puri in Orissa, and Pondicherry in Tamil Nadu catch the attention of every passerby. Toys made out of coconut shells are popular in Kerala. Clay toys from Bihar, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu, coir toys of Orissa, papier mache toys of Kashmir, and metal toys of Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh are popular countrywide. Indian Toys are known for its craft value and the rich culture it represents. Ironically, nowadays low cost materials like plastics are used in the manufacturing of toys. Plastic toys are available easily in both urban and rural India and are more affordable.

To conclude, toys are vital part of every childhood. Playing with toys helps children learn about the world around them in a much better way. Toys nurture healthy overall growth in children.

It is often said that play is a child's work. Play provides an outlet for children's imagination, creativity and ingenuity. Toys are tools that children use to play. They learn essential skills through their playtime with toys. Communication, fine and gross motor skills, cognition, creativity, problem solving, learning ability and social interaction are a few of the developmental areas that are stimulated by play activities. Toys can be categorized into various groups, depending on the part of the child it helps to stimulate. Here we will discuss the classic toys of India. We have divided the toys into these four broad categories.

Here the games have broadly categorized the games into 4 distinct categories.

- **Cognitive Toys:**

Toys that stimulate thinking and problem solving are cognitive toys.

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- **Physical Toys:**

Toys that help in developing gross and fine motor skills are physical toys.

- **Sensory Toys:**

Toys that stimulate the senses of hearing, smell, touch, sight, and taste are sensory toys.

- **Social Toys:**

Toys that help children to develop social skills and understand emotions are social toys.



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Cognitive Toys

Toys that help in developing the ability to process information, think, reason, analyze, and evaluate are categorized as cognitive toys. These toys encourage children to focus, reason, make decisions, strategize, organize, prioritize and remember. Cognitive toys help in developing concentration, memory, logical reasoning, analyzing skills, thinking skills, etc in children. Children learn better through their play and therefore, playing with cognitive toys is an essential part of their childhood.



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Here we have discussed Indian toys that help in cognitive development of Children. We have divided them into various categories like puzzles, sorting toys, sequencing toys, counting toys etc. All these toys develop skills in childhood that help them face challenges as they grow older.



Jigsaw Puzzles



Fit-in-a-Box Puzzles



Locking Puzzles



Cube Puzzles



Interlocking Puzzles



Shape Sorters



Other Puzzles



Logical Toys

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Jigsaw Puzzles

Puzzles consisting of various fragmented/interlocked pieces of different shapes, that have to be assembled together to form a complete picture or a 3-dimensional model are termed as Jigsaw Puzzles. Jigsaw puzzle pieces are made of wood, cardboard, plastic, metal, etc. Wooden Jigsaw puzzles from India are very famous worldwide. Jigsaw Puzzles are available for various levels of complexity to suit various age groups.

Playing with jigsaw puzzles is good for enhancing visual perception, developing critical thinking, improving memory, honing coordination and improving concentration. Jigsaw Puzzles are great fun and help to develop the ability to sequence, analyze and think logically. It enhances recognition abilities and observation skills in children.



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Fit-in-a-Box Puzzles

Fit-in-a-box puzzles are complex puzzles played by older kids and adults. These puzzles are made of many fragment pieces and a box. The goal of the puzzle is to be able to fit all the small pieces into the box. Some of these puzzles come along with a lid and one should be able to close the lid after putting all the pieces. Fit-in-a-box puzzles are usually made of wood. However, in recent times, some of these puzzles are also made of foam or plastic.

These puzzles enhance space perception skills, concentration, logical thinking and patience in children. Playing with such puzzles prepares the children for real-life skills needed in future.



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Locking Puzzles

Locking Puzzles are complex puzzles that have an unusual lock mechanism. The goal is to disentangle the pieces that are locked together. These puzzles are quite challenging and are more suitable for older kids and adults. These puzzles are usually made of metal wires.

These puzzles cultivate imagination and creativity in kids and improve dexterity while providing hands-on skills. They enhance assembly ability, thinking skills, hand eye coordination, and improve the IQ of the kids.



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Cube Puzzles

Snake Cube Puzzle:

Snake Cube Puzzles are types of mechanical puzzles which are made up of 27 or 64 interlinked small cubes connected by an elastic band. As with all mechanical puzzles, this toy is also a handheld toy that is manipulated to form a cube of size 3 X 3 or 4 X 4.

This puzzle is found widely all over India. It is made up of either wood or plastic.

Snake Cube Puzzle enhances logical thinking, patience and concentration. Children not only have fun while solving this puzzle but also learn important concepts of elimination, permutation, etc.



Soma Cube Puzzle:

Soma Cube Puzzle is one of the most outstanding cube puzzles. It consists of 7 pieces and each piece is made of various small cubes. In this puzzle, one has to assemble the 7 pieces together to form a cube.

This puzzle also enhances logical thinking and concentration. The important concepts of elimination, permutation, etc are also learnt.

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Interlocking Puzzles

Interlocking Puzzles are complex puzzles of various small pieces that lock together to form a complete shape. In these puzzles, once the puzzle is resolved, the puzzle pieces interlock with one another, preventing the assembly from falling apart. These puzzles are mostly made out of wood or plastic. Interlocking Toys from Karnataka are widely available across the country.

Interlocking puzzles enhance visual and spatial skills, hand-eye coordination, logical thinking, assembling ability, dexterity, patience and concentration.



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Shape Sorters

Shape Sorters Puzzles are fun challenging toys for very young kids aged 6 months to 2 years old. These toys are great for cognitive development and space perception skills. In these puzzles, babies try to fit the pieces into the pre-designated shaped space/hole.

The shape sorters help the child to develop hand-eye coordination, problem solving skills, fine motor skills and knowledge of various shapes and colors.



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Other Puzzles

There are many other puzzles manufactured in India. Some interesting puzzles are:

1. Star Puzzle

The three-dimensional star puzzle consists of many small pieces that one can fit together to create a star-shaped 3D model. This star requires a specific arrangement in a certain order to form the final shape. There are various variants of the star puzzle where the pieces of the puzzle are differently shaped than the star puzzle but the mechanism to assemble the puzzle remains the same.

2. Tangrams

Tangrams is an ancient puzzle that originated in China. However, this puzzle is widely manufactured in India and played by people of all ages in all parts of the country. Tangrams is a puzzle with 7 pieces of various shapes. Each piece is called a tan. All seven pieces are used to create various shapes and designs.

Playing with tangram puzzles develops decision making, visual orientation skills, spatial skills, etc. This puzzle also helps in honing creative thinking and spatial skills while providing hours of fun.

3. Rubik's Cube

Rubik's Cube is a 3D combination puzzle made up of 3*3 cubes connected by an internal mechanism to help in twisting and turning the cubes. All six surfaces are covered by different colored cubes. The aim of the scrambled puzzle is to bring together all 9 cubes of the same color on all 6 surfaces. Rubik's cube puzzle has been a fascinating toy for older children for ages. This toy helps the children to build problem solving skills and critical thinking skills. The Rubik's cube is now available in other shapes as well as more challenging cubes of 5*5 sizes are also available.

4. Fidget Puzzle

Fidget puzzles are handheld puzzles that are made of small pieces interconnected together with an elastic string such that they can be manipulated into various shapes. The pieces can be of various sizes and shapes. The pieces are twisted to create the desired shapes. This puzzle is very addictive and challenging. It helps in enhancing creativity, concentration and thinking.

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Logical Toys

Logical Toys are toys that require complex thinking and decision making at every step to solve the puzzle. These toys require a series of sequential moves in order to reach the desired goal. These toys require critical thinking while solving them. There are many toys in this category like Peg Solitaire, Parking Puzzles, Noughts and Crosses, Rubik's Cube, the 15 puzzles etc.

In India, these puzzles are found widely all over the country. Most of these puzzles are made out of wood or plastic.

Logical Toys enhance critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, strategy making skills and decision making skills. The simpler logical toys also help in developing gross motor skills in children. The complex logical toys exercise the mind in a healthy way thereby enhancing patience and concentration.

Here we have discussed several logical toys that are played by children in India.

1. Peg Solitaire Puzzle:

Peg Solitaire is a board game for solo players involving sequential movements of pegs on a board with many holes. It is played by jumping over another peg into an empty hole on the other side. When a peg is hopped over, it is immediately removed from the game board. The aim of the game is to remove the pegs until only one peg is left or until no moves are left for jumping over another peg.

These puzzles help to enhance decision making skills, problem solving skills, concentration, strategizing skills, and patience in the players

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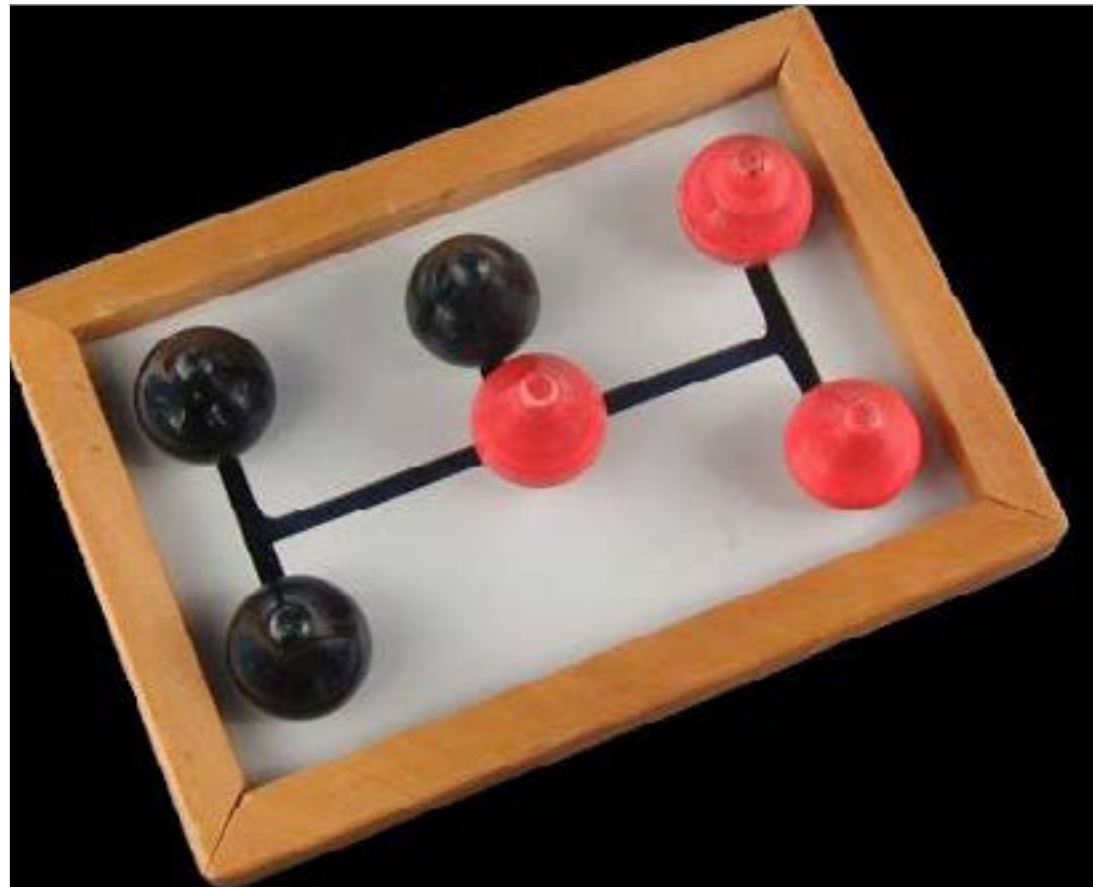
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2. Parking Puzzles:

Parking puzzles are hand-held puzzles, mostly played by older children. In these puzzles, the traffic challenge has to be first set and then the player has to battle the gridlock to reach the goal by sliding the blocks to clear the path.

These puzzles help in enhancing logical thinking, problem solving skills, concentration, decision making skills and in improving fine motor skills.



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3. Rubik's Cube:

Rubik's Cube is a 3D cubical combination puzzle with multicolored squares interconnected together with a pivot mechanism. The players turn and twist the squares such that all the squares on each face of the cube are of the same color.

Rubik's Cube is a very popular puzzle with teenagers. Due to its popularity, differently shaped cubes are also available which adds more challenge.



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4. 15 Puzzle:

The 15 puzzle is a handheld sliding puzzle. It is made up of a square frame with space for 4*4 tiles. There are 15 tiles set within the frame and space for 1 tile is left empty. The object of the game is to arrange the tiles in order by sliding the tiles vertically or horizontally into an empty space. The tiles are usually numbered 1 to 15 or the tiles could be pieces of a complete picture.

This puzzle is popular with 4 to 10-year-old children. However, it is enjoyed by both young and old. This puzzle helps in enhancing patience, critical thinking ability and problem solving skills.



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Physical Toys

Toys that stimulate physical growth in both mind and body are termed as physical toys. Generally, all play is physical. There are plenty of toys available in this category in the market. They help in the development of gross motor skills, and fine motor skills and enhance creativity and thinking in children.



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Physical toys are available in various materials like wood, cloth, paper, clay, metal, plastic, palm leaves, jute, etc. The wooden toys of Sawantwadi in Maharashtra, Kondapalli in Andhra Pradesh, Chennapatna in Karnataka, and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh are famous worldwide. The clay toys from West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa reflect the rich Indian tradition in its toys. The coir toys from Orissa and Papier Mache toys from Pondichery are noteworthy. Toys from Bihar, Rajasthan, and Gujarat are rich in color and design.



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3b. Construction Toys

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Design Resource

Indian Toys

Toys for children

by

Seema Periwal and Prof. Ravi Poovaiah

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/indian-toys/physical-toys>

The physical toys are available in plenty all across India. They enhance creativity and thinking in children while providing hours of fun. The vibrant colors used along with the traditional motifs painted on the toys help in keeping the folk tradition alive.



Spinning Toys



Construction Toys



Wheeled Toys



Dexterity Toys



Stringed Toys



Moving Toys

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/indian-toys/types-toys/physical-toys/spinning-toys>

Spinning Toys

Spinning toys are simple toys designed to be spun on the ground on the tip of the axis. These toys remain balanced on the tip due to inertia. Tops are shaped like a peg where the top of the body is much wider than the bottom, or tip. Sometimes a string, stem or cap is included to make the top spin; when the string is pulled quickly, it causes a rapid unwinding that sets the top in motion.

Tops are one of the world's oldest toys. They are typically made of wood but are also found in other materials like clay, metal, plastic, etc. Children are often seen having hours of fun while playing with tops. The older children learn concepts of symmetry and balancing by observing a spinning top.



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Source:

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Construction Toys

Construction Toys are small pieces of geometrically shaped blocks that can be assembled in various combinations to form three-dimensional compositions. These blocks are used by the children to make creative structures ranging from simple ones to highly complex structures depending on their age and their imagination.

Construction Toys are made of various materials like cardboard, wood, metal, clay, bamboo, plastic etc. They are available widely for various age groups beginning from 6 months old. The young children play with simple construction toys like stacking toys and nesting toys whereas the older ones play with complex building blocks. These toys give children an open end opportunity to explore their creativity.

Construction toys help develop problem-solving skills, spatial skills, as well as motor skills. They nurture the imagination of the players help in building self-confidence and encourage independent learning.



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Source:

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Wheeled Toys

Wheeled Toys are small hand held toys that move on wheels. Boys are usually seen playing with wheeled toys like cars, scooters, jeeps, etc. Children love to play with the wheeled toys and are fascinated to watch the toys moving. Some of the toys are push toys in which the children need to push the toys to make them move, and some toys could be Pull Along Toys which have a cord attached to them and move when dragged.

The wheeled toys are made of various materials like wood, metal, plastic, etc. These toys are available widely all over India. Wooden wheeled toys from Sawantwadi in Maharashtra, Channapatna in Karnataka, and Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh are very famous.

Children learn cause and effect relationships when playing with wheeled objects. It helps in building dexterity in small kids as they pick and drop the toys.



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Dexterity Toys

Dexterity Toys

Dexterity means the ability of our hands to coordinate movements. Toys that promote movement of fingers, hands and wrists are called dexterity Toys. These toys help children to develop fine motor skills for challenging activities like writing, painting, buttoning, dressing, etc. Dexterity toys strengthen hand muscles.

There are various levels of dexterity toys available in the market for age groups beginning from 3 months onwards. These toys are made of various materials like cloth, wood, plastic, metal, bamboo, clay, etc. Many pre-schools and occupational therapists use dexterity toys to improve dexterity in children while engaging them in meaningful, playful, and enjoyable activities.

Shape Sorters

Shape Sorters Puzzles are fun challenging toys for very young kids aged 6 months to 2 years old. These toys are great for cognitive development and space perception skills. In these puzzles, babies try to fit the pieces into the pre-designated shaped space/hole.

The shape sorters help the child to develop the hand eye coordination, problem solving skills, fine motor skills and knowledge of various shapes and colors.



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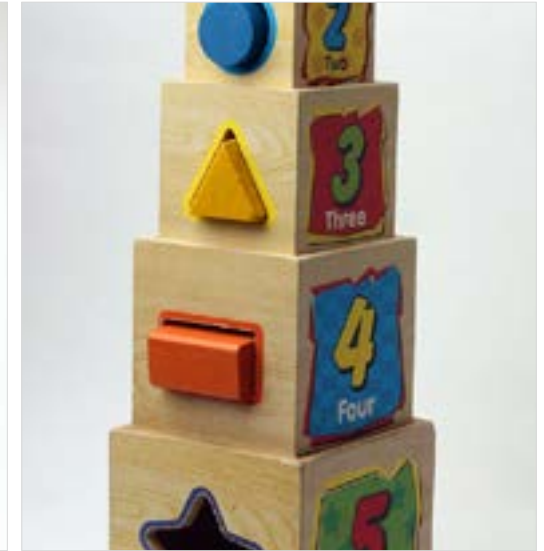
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Nail and Hammer Toys

Nail and Hammer Toys help young children to develop hand eye coordination and develops fine motor skills in children. This toy helps to develop an understanding of spatial space.



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Cup and the Ball Game

The cup and ball toy is one of the favourite dexterity toys for older children. The objective of the game is to insert the ball into the cup. These wooden toys are available in a variety of colors. This toy helps in building fine motor skills, understanding concepts of physics, and helps in improving hand-eye coordination.



Lacing and Beading Toys

Lacing toys promote hand-eye coordination, fine motor, cognitive and visual perception skills. These toys help in building concentration in young children and prepare them for future activities of tying shoes, threading a needle, sewing, and many other day-to-day activities.



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Labyrinth Game

Labyrinth Puzzles are hand held, physical skill puzzles that consist of a box with a maze and a few steel marbles. The aim of this puzzle is to bring the balls to the destination point by passing through the maze.

Most of the Labyrinth puzzles are made of wood. These puzzles help in enhancing concentration hand eye coordination, dexterity and problem solving skills



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Stringed Toys

Stringed Toys are toys that have strings attached to them provide controlled movement to the object. There are many different varieties of stringed toys like puppets, fun toys, etc. Depending on their form and intended use they are made up of various materials like cloth, paper, plastic, palm leaves, etc. They vary from being simple pull-along toys to complex ones as in Jacob's Ladder.

Stringed toys are enjoyed by children as well as adults. Puppets are used as a storytelling devices. Playing with stringed toys helps the children not only enhance creativity and dexterity but also helps them to understand the various concepts of physics like optical illusion, concepts of centrifugal forces, laws of gravity and equilibrium, concepts of sounds, levers and inclined planes, etc.

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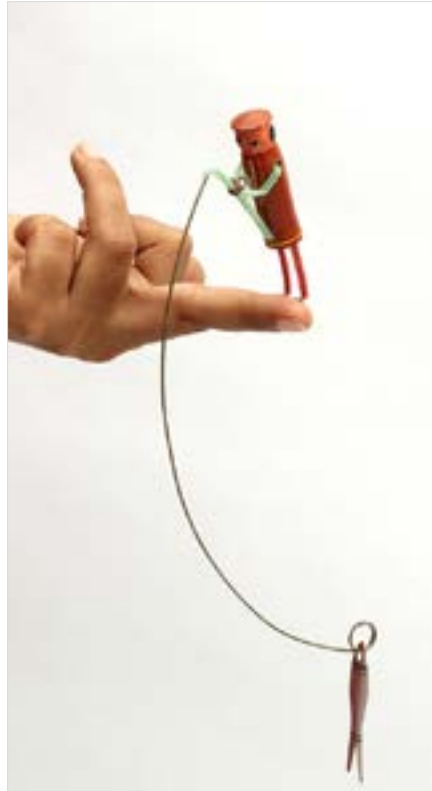
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Sensory Toys

Toys that stimulate the senses of smelling, seeing, tasting, hearing, and feeling are called Sensory Toys or Tactile Toys. Sensory toys stimulate the fundamental senses, make them stronger and promote sensory integration. Many of the sensory toys are used by therapists to improve certain kinds of disorders.

Many of the sensory toys are made of natural materials like cloth, coir, jute, bamboo, clay etc. These toys are available throughout the country in vibrant colors.



Musical Toys

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Musical Toys

Musical Toys are toys that produce some sound/noise due to a specific action like blowing, shaking, pulling, beating etc. These toys help children learn cause and effect. Musical toys introduce children to the variety of tones and pitches. Early musical experiences are very important for social, cognitive and physical development of children, as well as their future musical competencies. These toys help children to bring rhythm to their movements.

Musical Toys are made from various kinds of materials like wood, metal, clay, bamboo, plastic, and grass. The lacquered wooden musical toys like rattles, maracas, etc. are from Chennapatna in Karnataka and Sawantwadi in Maharashtra. The clay toys are from Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Ektara, the stringed instrument, is from West Bengal.

Some of the classic Indian musical toys have been photographed here. The design of some of the musical toys has changed over the years to suit the present needs of society.

- Rattles
- Whistles
- Flutes
- Xylophone
- Drums



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Social Toys

Toys that help children express and understand emotions, and social relationships are known as Social Toys. These toys help children to develop social and language skills as well as help in emotional development. They develop their verbal language as well as body language through play-sharing and role-playing.

Social toys are played by children in the age group of 1 yr to adults. The toys in these categories range from very small pieces to large huggable pieces. They are available in various materials like wood, cloth, coir, bamboo, metal, plastic, etc. The children learn to develop social skills for both verbal and non-verbal communication.



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Role Playing Toys



Dolls and Puppets

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Role Playing Toys

Role Playing Toys or Pretend Play Toys are toys that children play with to imitate real-life roles. Pretend Play Toys are very important for a child's emotional development. These toys help in nurturing the imagination to play socially and help them to develop them emotionally. These toys help them to learn about their environment and enhance their social skills like language, body language, etc by encouraging interaction.

Young children in the age group of 1 year to pre-teens are involved in playing with pretend play toys. These make-believe toys are available in various materials like wood, cloth, metal, plastic, bamboo, glass, etc. These toys are an excellent source of creativity and insight and help children to become more well-rounded.



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Dolls and Puppets

Dolls and puppets are very popular toys in the pretend Play category. Usually, girls are seen playing with dolls from a very young age. They have been popular role playing toys since time unknown. Children enter the world of fantasy by playing with the dolls and puppets while they imitate real-life roles. This helps them to become aware of the environment around them and enhances thinking, creativity and imagination in children.

Dolls and puppets from India are very famous around the world. Handcrafted dolls intricately dressed in traditional clothes are available all over India. These dolls and puppets are made of cloth, shells, coconut, terracotta, bamboo, wood, wires, cane, etc. Dolls and puppets from Gujarat, Haryana, Manipur and Rajasthan are dressed in bright colored traditional clothes representing the state. In villages of India, there still exists a tradition of tradition of making cloth dolls by the women folk of almost every family in cloth, straw, wool, etc.

Playing with dolls and puppets is very beneficial for small kids as they learn to identify various textures, colors, body parts, and fine motor skills of buttoning, lacing, etc. They are comfort objects for many children thereby providing them with emotional support and enhancing their social communication skills.



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Kitchen Toys

Children are inquisitive and imitate the adults doing their chores while they play. In order to facilitate role-playing by the children, kitchen toys are essential toys for every growing child. These toys are miniature versions of real-life objects and children take the first step into the real world through such toys.

In India, the kitchen toys are found in every nook and corner. They are made of clay, wood, cane, bamboo, coir, and metals like aluminium, brass, copper, etc. Young girls and boys are often seen playing with these toys. The brass toys of Moradabad in U.P and wooden kitchen sets of Varanasi in U.P, as well as Chennapatna in Karnataka are quite popular.

These toys help to instil confidence in children, develop organization and social skills and improve their fine motor skills. It helps children to work in teams, teaches them to clean and organize and take care of their belongings. Moreover, it teaches children to identify the objects around them and to understand their function.



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Toys for children

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Seema Periwal and Prof. Ravi Poovaiah

IDC, IIT Bombay

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<https://dsource.in/resource/indian-toys/contact-details>

Contact Details

This documentation was done by Seema Periwal at [Industrial Design Centre \(IDC\), IIT Bombay](#).

You can get in touch with her at [pdseema\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:pdseema[at]gmail.com)

You can write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

Helpdesk Details:

Co-ordinator

Project e-kalpa

Industrial Design Centre

IIT Bombay

Powai

Mumbai 4000 076

India

Phone: 091-22-2159 6805/ 091-22-2576 7802

Email: [dsource.in\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dsource.in[at]gmail.com)

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