

Why Fewer Toys Will Benefit Your Kids

WRITTEN BY JOSHUA BECKER

“The potential possibilities of any child are the most intriguing and stimulating in all creation.” —Ray L. Wilbur

Toys are not merely playthings. Toys form the building blocks for our child’s future. They teach our children about the world and about themselves. They send messages and communicate values. And thus, wise parents think about what foundation is being laid by the toys that are given to their kids.

Wise parents also think about the number of toys that children are given. While most toy rooms and bedrooms today are filled to the ceiling with toys, intentional parents learn to limit the number of toys that kids have to play with.

They understand that fewer toys will actually benefit their children in the long-term:

- 1. Kids learn to be more creative.** Too many toys prevent kids from fully developing their gift of imagination. Two German public health workers (Strick and Schubert) conducted **an experiment** in which they convinced a kindergarten classroom to remove all of their toys for three months. Although boredom set in during the initial stages of the experiment, the children soon began to use their basic surroundings to invent games and use imagination in their playing.
- 2. Kids develop longer attention spans.** When too many toys are introduced into a child’s life, their attention span will begin to suffer. A child will rarely learn to fully appreciate the toy in front of them when there are countless options remaining on the shelf behind them.
- 3. Kids establish better social skills.** Children with fewer toys learn how to develop interpersonal relationships with other kids and adults. They learn the give and take of a good conversation. And studies have attributed childhood friendships to a greater chance of success academically and in social situations during adulthood.
- 4. Kids learn to take greater care of things.** When kids have too many toys, they will naturally take less care of them. They will not learn to value them if there is always a replacement ready at hand. If you have a child who is constantly damaging their toys, just take a bunch away. He will quickly learn.
- 5. Kids develop a greater love for reading, writing, and art.** Fewer toys allows your children to love books, music, coloring, and painting. And a love for art will help them better appreciate beauty, emotion, and communication in their world.
- 6. Kids become more resourceful.** In education, students aren’t just given the answer to a problem; they are given the tools to find the answer. In entertainment and play, the same principle can be applied. Fewer toys causes children to become

resourceful by solving problems with only the materials at hand. And resourcefulness is a gift with unlimited potential.

7. Kids argue with each other less. This may seem counter-intuitive. Many parents believe that more toys will result in less fighting because there are more options available. However, the opposite is true far too often. Siblings argue about toys. And every time we introduce a new toy into the relationship, we give them another reason to establish their “territory” among the others. On the other hand, siblings with fewer toys are forced to share, collaborate, and work together.

8. Kids learn perseverance. Children who have too many toys give up too quickly. If they have a toy that they can't figure out, it will quickly be discarded for the sake of a different, easier one. Kids with fewer toys learn perseverance, patience, and determination.

9. Kids become less selfish. Kids who get everything they want believe they can have everything they want. This attitude will quickly lead to an unhealthy (and unbecoming) lifestyle.

10. Kids experience more of nature. Children who do not have a basement full of toys are more apt to play outside and develop a deep appreciation for nature. They are also more likely to be involved in physical exercise which results in healthier and happier bodies.

11. Kids learn to find satisfaction outside of the toy store. True joy and contentment will never be found in the aisles of a toy store. Kids who have been raised to think the answer to their desires can be bought with money have believed the same lie as their parents. Instead, children need encouragement to live counter-cultural lives finding joy in things that truly last.

12. Kids live in a cleaner, tidier home. If you have children, you know that toy clutter can quickly take over an entire home. Fewer toys results in a less-cluttered, cleaner, healthier home.

I'm not anti-toy. I'm just pro-child. So, do your child a favor today and limit their number of toys. (Just don't tell them you got the idea from me.)