
LAST-MINUTE

*Gift
Guide*

2020

How to *Select Safe Toys for Kids* This Holiday Season



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| StatePoint

Children look forward to opening their holiday presents all year. However, there are some things to keep in mind to make sure gifts are safe and appropriate:

To help you make savvy selections, PlaySafe.org from The Toy Association, the premier site for toy safety information, is offering the following guidance:

- **Avoid shady sellers:** This time of year can be especially costly, making it tempting to shop around. However, that low priced toy may not actually be “a good deal.”

“U.S. toy safety laws are considered the gold standard. Before reaching your home, a toy is subjected to over 100 different safety standards and tests and must be certified compliant by an independent testing laboratory,” says Joan Lawrence, The Toy Association’s “Toy Safety Mom” and senior vice president of standards and regulatory affairs. “The cheap imitations and counterfeits available online from illicit sellers haven’t met these same safety standards.”

A recent survey commissioned by The Toy Association of U.S. parents who are their household’s primary toy purchaser revealed

that 71 percent of parents whose kids get holiday gifts from grandparents who shop online aren’t completely confident that their elders know how to ensure that toys are from verified sellers. In the same survey, 19 percent of parents report that their child has received a knock-off toy that was bought online.

Parents should talk to gift purchasers about sticking with verified sellers. This includes buying directly from brand websites or by following provided links to official retailers selling a brand’s products. For those who do choose to shop through lesser-known online sellers, checking out reviews and a product’s legitimacy before making a purchase is essential.

- **Follow age recommendations:** Playing with toys above a child’s age grade can lead to misuse and possible injury. However, 26 percent of parents in The Toy Association survey report that their kid has received a toy which was meant for kids who were older. Pay special attention to age grading on product labels and encourage family members who are also toy shopping to do the same. These are not merely suggestions; they’re firm recommendations made by safety experts based on childhood developmental stages. Find this information on labels and in

product descriptions. If it’s not available, that’s a red flag and could mean the toy is illicit.

- **Pay attention to toys labeled 3+:** Toys labeled 3+ may contain small parts that can be a choking hazard for children under 3 or kids who still mouth toys. While these items often make great gifts for older kids, they should be stowed away after playtime to keep younger siblings safe. Not sure if a toy is small enough to be hazardous? Consider getting a Small Parts Tester to test toys and other small household objects.

- **Monitor playtime:** Kids find ways to play with things that are not toys, including objects that can be very dangerous if accidentally swallowed. The holiday season may introduce new curiosities to the house (e.g. batteries, high-powered magnets, decorations, medications from visiting family members). On the other hand, there is a federal law that requires batteries in toys to be kept inaccessible, thanks to the use of a locking mechanism. Keep dangerous, non-toy items out-of-reach and monitor children during playtime.

For additional toy safety information, tips and resources, visit PlaySafe.org.

“Don’t let your child unwrap a potential safety hazard this holiday season,” says Lawrence. “By shopping smart you can ensure safe play.”

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Publisher/Executive Editor Steven Pappas

General Sales Manager Tim Duguay

Creative Services Manager Keri Franzoni

Customer Service Manager Melody Hudson

Advertising Krystal Marshall and Kristi Wolfrom

Design Tiahna Gillam

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From **Black-owned** businesses

By **Melissa Erickson** | [More Content Now](#)

It's never been easier to shop at Black-owned businesses. In addition to large e-market sites and apps including We Buy Black, Official Black Wall Street, Support Black Owned, Black Nation and Post ²¹, Pinterest this year introduced new shop boards after noticing that searches for Black-owned businesses were way up. Consider shopping and supporting Black-owned businesses this holiday season.



AlmaRose Lydia Tote

\$131.99 — [almarosebags.com](#)

Fashion meets function in the AlmaRose Lydia bag that is crafted with high-quality pebble leather for a stylish exterior, while a water- and stain-resistant interior can handle life's spills. The Lydia is a classic tote with a pop of color and enough pockets and features to accommodate a mom's needs, from kids to work to real life. Creator and designer Almashea' Spotser began her Jacksonville, Florida, business as a mission to help women carry it all. The idea is that a mom can go from one aspect of her life to the next without interrupting her flow just to change a bag.



Old Arthur's Pit Master's Gift Pack

\$45 — [OldArthurs.com](#)

Spice up barbecuing with a gift pack filled with Old Arthur's award-winning sauces and rubs. Crafted from family recipes that have been passed down for five generations, the Pit Master's Gift Pack contains two bottles of Old Arthur's Original Barbecue Sauce and one bottle of Hot & Spicy Sauce, plus six signature dry rubs. The Old Arthur family history began with Arthur Watts, who was born into slavery and crafted his seasonings while preparing the owner's family meals over an open pit. After emancipation, Watts put his cooking skills to work, earning a living catering social functions for churches and cities throughout central Illinois.

Yummy Buddy Plush Toy

\$29.99 — [darlyngandco.com](#)

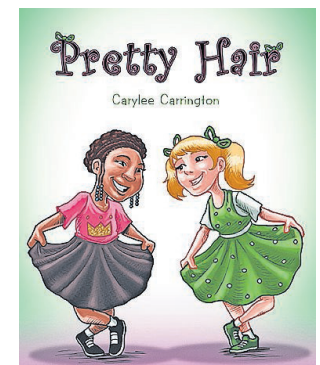
A sensory chew toy, Yummy Buddy Plush is designed to engage an infant or toddler's vision, hearing and fine motor skills. Its bright, contrasting patterns will fascinate babies as eyesight develops, and they can discover new sounds, colors and textures as they play. Yummy Buddy has crinkly ears, chewable "glow" silicone hands, teething bib, multiple colors and chimes when shaken. A multi-purpose clip allows Yummy Buddy to travel with you attached to a stroller or diaper bag.



'Pretty Hair' by Carylee Carrington

\$13.95 — [Amazon.com](#)

Telling the story of a little girl named Sophia and her first day of school, "Pretty Hair" helps young girls understand that there are an amazing variety of styles and textures of hair, and no one type is the definition of pretty. Children learn to embrace their differences and the differences of others and see the beauty and value in each of us, no matter our outward appearance.



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National *giving*

By Melissa Erickson
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Pets

• PetSmart Charities

[Petsmartcharities.org](http://petsmartcharities.org)

Goal: To find lifelong, loving homes for all pets.

More than 400,000 dogs and cats find homes each year through PetSmart Charities adoption program in all PetSmart stores and sponsored adoption events. In addition to granting money to directly help pets in need, the program focuses on

funding spay/neuter services that help communities solve the problem of pet overpopulation.

Cancer

• National Breast Cancer Coalition Fund

[Stopbreastcancer.org](http://stopbreastcancer.org)

Goal: To end breast cancer.

A grassroots organization committed to action, the National Breast Cancer Coalition seeks to improve policies surrounding research, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer.

• Cancer Research Institute

[Cancerresearch.org](http://cancerresearch.org)

Goal: To save more lives by fueling the discovery and development of powerful immunotherapies for all types of cancer.

The Cancer Research Institute focuses exclusively on advancing immunotherapy to treat, control and cure all cancers.

Goal: Preserving parks today; creating park stewards for tomorrow.

The National Park Trust works to acquire and preserve high-quality land, engages youth through its Buddy Bison School program to cultivate future stewards, and hosts the national Kids to Parks day.

• National Wildlife Federation

[NWF.org](http://nwf.org)

Goal: To unite all Americans to ensure wildlife thrives in a rapidly changing world.

America's largest conservation organization, the National Wildlife Federation protects wildlife and safeguards endangered species, and cares for America's habitats including waters and wetlands.

Children

• Children's Defense Fund

[Childrensdefense.org](http://childrensdefense.org)

Goal: To ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start and a moral start in life and successful passage to adulthood.

The Children's Defense Fund is an independent voice for all of America's children, but pays special attention to the needs of the poor, children of color and those with disabilities.

• Feed My Starving Children

[FMSC.org](http://fmsc.org)

Goal: To eliminate starvation in children throughout the world by helping to instill compassion in people to hear and respond to the cries of those in need.

Partnering with organizations and ministries, Feed My Starving Children reaches the most needy and vulnerable in America and around the world.

Veterans

• Gary Sinise Foundation

[Garysinisefoundation.org](http://garysinisefoundation.org)

Goal: To honor the nation's defenders, veterans, first responders, their families and those in need through unique programs designed to entertain, educate, inspire, strengthen and build communities.

The actor's foundation supports active-duty service members and veterans. Some projects include building custom smart homes for severely injured heroes, helping soldiers and their families following trauma and loss, and providing meals for defenders during layovers at major airports.

Environment

• National Park Trust

[Parktrust.org](http://parktrust.org)

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Home Lighting

to Add to Your Holiday Wish List

| StatePoint

Spending more time at home working, learning and simply living? The holiday season is the perfect opportunity to gift your household with lighting that enhances the feel and function of your spaces.

To take advantage of the best deals of the season, create your “lighting wish list” in advance of Cyber Monday. Manufacturers such as Progress

Lighting are making it easy to plan ahead. As you seek inspiration, consider these designs, which align with the latest home decor trends:

- **Bath & Vanity:** Create a serene bathroom oasis capturing the old and the new. Featuring a clean, precise design, the Hansford Collection's four-light bath and vanity bracket with an Antique Bronze finish lends itself to farmhouse, coastal or industrial interiors. For a modern, yet timeless look, consider

the Carisa Collection's three-light Vintage Gold Bath light. Its metallic finish supports glossy white glass globes.

- **Ceiling Fans:** Add expansive design to great rooms, living rooms and bedrooms with statement-making ceiling fans. The Springer Collection 60-inch 12-Blade Distressed Walnut Coastal Windmill fan, inspired by the form and function of a windmill, has an architectural bronze finish ideal for farmhouse, industrial and transitional interior settings. For sophisticated, modern design, consider the Glandon Collection 60-inch fan, which has full-range dimming and reversible blades in driftwood and walnut.

- **Chandeliers:** Complement rustic and modern farmhouse home décor in hallways, foyers and great rooms, as well as urban industrial and coastal interior settings, with the four-light linear chandelier of the Gulliver Collection. Its three circular bands wrap together for an open design. Dual-toned frame color combinations of graphite feature weathered gray accents. Or, create a soft, muted glow with the four-light black chandelier in the Durrell Collection. Inside the sailcloth linen shade, nestle light bases on gently curved arms coated in a beautiful finish.

Demand attention with the Lassiter Five-Light Brushed Nickel Chandelier. Square tubing with clean angles and striking vintage light sockets blend the modern with traditional.

- **Close-to-Ceiling:** A new category of vintage modern fixtures takes center stage with this convertible fixture in the

Debut Collection. Delicate details in a graphite finish create a statement-making focal piece for a variety of interiors -- whether mounted flush to the ceiling or chain-hung -- for a fitting stage to feature nostalgic vintage lamps. For rustic flair, consider a close-to-ceiling fixture in the Durrell Collection featuring a round open-cage frame coated in a farmhouse-style matte black finish.

- **Outdoor:** Enhance modern and transitional style settings outdoors with the minimalist, yet exciting design of the Square Wall Lantern. The crisscross design of the Hollingsworth Collection Wall Lantern surrounds clear seeded glass, emulating popular farmhouse décor and when paired with vintage or traditional bulbs, enhances a variety of transitional exteriors.

- **Pendants:** The concentric rings of Equinox pendants pivot for an otherworldly feel inspired by astronomy, whereas Penn, a one-light large pendant with a clear glass sphere in a natural brass finish, embraces a modern take on vintage electric design.

- **Controls:** Experience the convenience of touchless lighting with voice control through Siri, Amazon Alexa, or the Google Assistant using the iDevices Smart Lighting Controls. Manage home lighting from anywhere and set dynamic scenes via the connected app.

By upgrading home lighting during the holidays, you can affordably gift your family beautiful, functional spaces.



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Gifts for *teens*

By **Melissa Erickson**
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Teens can be difficult to shop for, especially when adults feel out of touch with youth culture. Think about the teen you're buying for. Consider their personality and interests.

If you still have trouble coming up with ideas, here are some "straight fire" — as the teens would say — suggestions:



Zaphyr Phone Case with Detachable Strap

\$39 — Zaphyr-cases.com

Teens are inseparable from their phones. The Zaphyr phone case with detachable strap keeps their hands free for the important things in life. Zaphyr is a cool tech gadget and high-quality lifestyle accessory that can be worn around the neck or as a crossbody. For everyone one who needs hands-free time yet constant access to their phone for a quick selfie, texting or online shopping. Available in light blush, peach, black and grey.

Story Spark Ascend T-Shirt

\$27 — Storyspark.com

T-shirts are a great gift that won't sit on a shelf collecting dust. The techie teen will appreciate Story Spark's gadget-inspired tees like the Ascend T-shirt that features a fleet of circuit board-inspired paper airplanes. Available in XS-3XL.



Isabelle Grace Alphabet Bead Bracelet

\$24 — Isabellegracejewelry.com

Fashion should be fun, because life is too short for boring. These trendy alphabet bead bracelets are a playful way for teens to express themselves. Perfect for stacking a couple with your favorite sayings/names, or wear them mixed in with a current bracelet stack. Add in a heart symbol for extra emphasis. Max of 10 letter/heart characters. Gold bracelets come with white beads, and silver bracelets come with black beads. Heart bead available in eight colors.

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