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Americans Spending \$2 Billions On Toys

About \$2 billion will be spent on toys in the United States this Christmas season. Some of those dollars will be converted to hours of pleasure and — dare we use the word? — education for the nation's children.

Many other dollars will miss the mark, and the toys and games which they buy will languish in the attic beginning Dec. 26.

Toys sometimes are designed to catch adults, not children; because adults most often do the buying. Just as some fishing lures, are created to catch fisherman, not their finny prey.

How to avoid the pitfalls of toy buying? Not an easy task. But, happily, there exist guidelines to this mission into which parents hurtle themselves each year—with the best of intentions.

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SOME MORE important things to look for when buying a toy were spelled out by A. C. Gilbert Jr. head of one of the nation's pioneer toy companies. Gilbert, through the years, has developed a sense of child psychology, which, he claims, is essential to the proper hunching of next year's toy models Gilbert's advice:

Buy a toy suited to your

child's stage of development rather than his age, and take your cue from the child's interests. Infants prefer dangling toys or chewy ones; while young children like toys they can push, pull and handle. When they're old enough to read, science sets and board games are popular.

Consider what a toy can do to improve a child's skills. Foam rubber squeeze toys and sports equipment can help build muscle tone and improve coordination while science sets widen intellectual horizons.

Choose a basic toy, one that can be used in several different ways. Construction sets, for example, allow a child to make many toys, and it fits a variety of skill levels.

Expert full value for your money. Consider how long the toy is likely to last and hold the child's interest. It should be fairly sturdy for its purpose. Try to recall what you know about the manufacturer's reputation.

Think about your child's personality. A youngster who tends to be introspective will prefer a toy that allows him to build up a story around its action.