

Study suggests giving kids too many toys stifles their creativity

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(Medical Xpress)—A team of researchers at the University of Toledo in the U.S. has found that children are more creative when they have fewer toys to play with at one time. In their paper published in the journal

Infant Behavior and Development, the group describes their observational study of toddlers at play, what they learned and offer some suggestions for parents.

Parents have long been subject to the opinions of others, some of which include judgments regarding the number of toys they should provide for their [children](#). Some suggest more toys show children they are more loved, while others argue more toys is overkill and a poor substitute for parental attention. In this new effort, the researchers have conducted a simple experiment meant to test creativity in toddlers playing with toys.

In the experiment, parents were asked to bring toddlers to a play area where the little ones were given either four toys or 16 toys to play alone with for 30 minutes. Each of the 36 toddlers who participated was observed by the researchers who were on the lookout for activities that could be counted as creative.

The researchers found that the toddlers playing with four toys engaged in more creative activities than did the toddlers who had 16 toys to choose from. They also found, unsurprisingly, that toddlers with fewer options tended to play with each of the toys available to them for a longer amount of time. Much of that additional time, the researchers noted, was taken up with finding new ways to play with them.

It should be noted that the [researchers](#) are not suggesting that children should have fewer toys overall—instead, they are suggesting that children demonstrate more creativity if they only have the option of playing with just a few of them at a time. They believe [parents](#) would do well to keep most of a child's toys locked away while their [toddler](#) plays with a small subset at any given time. An abundance of toys, they further note, may present a disruption factor, making it more difficult for the child to get the most out of any one toy—fewer [toys](#) nudge them towards resourcefulness.

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