



# Creating Play Environments: Keeping Toys Within Reach

Making toys easier to reach and manipulate helps to extend the life of a toy and a child's interest. Many children find that as they move to get a toy they push it out of their reach. When they are unable to retrieve it, they quickly lose interest or become frustrated. There are things we can do to ensure playtime is fun for everyone!

## Stabilizing the Toy

Toys can be secured to a floor table or other surface to make them easier to use. Using adhesive backed loop (female) on the table and hook (male) Velcro on the toy, ensures



that the toy will stay in one place. This works particularly well with items such as busy boxes, in/out containers, sorters, pound toys, and bases for building-

anything that needs to stay in one place!

◆ Showloop is a fabric which acts as loop velcro, but can cover a larger surface. It adheres with craft spray and creates an environment for a variety of small and larger toys to be placed on. Simply put a small piece of hook velcro on toys, household objects, or book covers to stick to the showloop surface.

◆ Carpet squares can be used in place of showloop for a slightly less secured surface

◆ Roly-poly toys need to move when they are batted. Try placing a piece of non-slip material or dycem under the toy. This will allow it to be used, but not to move out of the baby's reach.

## Confining Toys

Another way to keep toys within touchable reach or seeable view is to use box tops, shoe boxes, or planter bases. Try putting a moving toy in a hula hoop; it's more fun to watch when it doesn't get away!

## Attachers

Children playing on their backs often need toys lowered to reach them easier. Try using links, elastic, ribbon or shoelaces (stringers are fun!); make sure they are attached securely. Look in fabric stores for snaps on fabric tape (for toddler pants)- an easy way to hang items! They can also be used to attach toys or books to a tray for the child to retrieve.

## Extending/Building Up Toys

Molding plasticine (found in craft stores) can be formed to fit over or replace too-small parts or handles. This is a great way to increase access. For crayons, markers, brushes and eating utensils, cylindrical foam can be slipped over the item to make it easier to hold.



## VENDOR LIST

*Velcro, Get a Grip -  
foam grips and Racy Laces:*  
Creative Educational Surplus  
9801 James Circle  
Bloomington, Minnesota 55431  
Phone (612) 884-6427  
Fax (612) 884-8336

*Dycem, Foam grip:*  
Sammons  
P.O. Box 386  
Western Springs, IL 60558-0386  
Phone (800) 323-5547  
Fax (800) 547-4333

*Fun Links:*  
Right Start  
Right Start Plaza  
5334 Sterling Center Dr.  
West Lake Village, CA 91361-4627  
Phone (800)548-8531

*Show loop:*  
Lockfast, Inc.  
10904 Deerfield Dr.,  
P.O.Box 42488  
Cincinnati, OH 45242  
Phone (800) 543-7157

*Stringers - Magic shoelaces:*  
Perfectly Safe  
7245 Whipple Ave., NW  
North Canton , OH 44720  
Phone (800) 837-5437  
Fax (216) 494-0265

*Dycem:*  
Abilitations  
One Sportime Way  
Atlanta, GA 30340  
Phone (800) 283-5700

*Non-slip material:*  
Commercially available by Rubbermaid