



HOLIDAY COUNTDOWN

WHAT TO BUY

GIFTS FOR INFANTS



▲ **Keepsake ornament** — Baby's first Christmas can be remembered forever with a special bauble on the tree. Some styles include a picture frame. Available at area Hallmark stores or www.hallmark.com/keepsake-ornaments. \$13-\$15.

Babies probably will get the most enjoyment out of tearing into packages and eating the tissue paper, but the gifts inside can help promote learning and motor development long after the holiday chaos has passed. Beware of toys that are too advanced for the current age — birthdays and grandparent spoiling will bring many more gifts throughout the coming year, and you'll just end up with an overwhelming surplus on both your baby's stimulation limit and your storage space. Always avoid toys that may choke, smother, or otherwise injure your baby, as well as any that are painted or made with toxic materials. Those are the rules Santa's elves follow.

— Rebecca Conklin Kleiboemer
Blade Staff Writer



▲ **Music CDs** — Great for bedtime or long car trips, *Baby Einstein: Lullaby Classics* offers tunes that will acclimate little ears to classical music right from the start. Composers include Mozart, Mendelssohn, Bach, Pachelbel, Debussy, Beethoven, Vivaldi, and — of course — Brahms. Available at amazon.com. \$4.

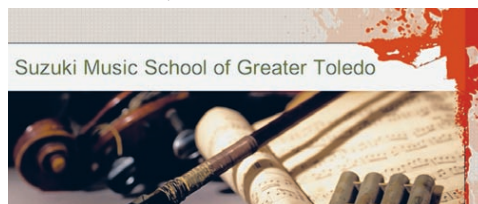


▲ **Outfit accessories** — Make sure your little one looks fabulous in those holiday pictures with adorable handmade accessories from local designer Sara Young of Perrysburg. From bibs and diaper covers to hair bows, tutus, and neckties with matching suspenders, she will make your custom order from a variety of fabrics. Available through Etsy at www.etsy.com/shop/rainingbabies or call 419-410-0711. \$5-\$35.



▲ **Classic toys** — They're called classic for a good reason: bright colors, durability, just the right texture for teething. Modern versions of that cute-faced phone, stacking rainbow rings, xylophone, and bead maze have been updated to consumer safety standards. Available at Babies R Us stores in Toledo and Springfield Township and www.babiesrus.com. \$8-\$30.

▼ **Learning class** — Suzuki Music School of Greater Toledo offers a weekly interactive class for parents and their babies to develop melodic and rhythmic awareness, memory, and social skills with nursery rhymes, action songs, and lullabies. Call 419-865-3449; suzukimusicchoolofgreaterledo.musicteachershelper.com. Twelve one-hour sessions. \$118.



▲ **Bath toys** — Tubby time is always more fun with toys. Go beyond the squishy fish with the Summer Infant Tub Time Bubble Maker, a waterproof, battery-operated machine that suctions to the bathtub and automatically blows bubbles from a tear-free solution. Available at area Meijer stores and meijer.com. \$15.



▲ **Board books** — Simple words and basic concepts like colors and counting are great for baby's brain, especially with repetition, and they're easy for a half-asleep caregiver to read. The sturdy pages stand up to drool, too. Classics include *Goodnight Moon*, *Pat the Bunny*, and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Available at area Barnes & Noble stores and www.barnesandnoble.com. \$5-\$12.



▲ **Rattles** — Your baby will shake, rattle, and roll with Mini Orchestra rattles that will stimulate with interesting sounds and vibrant colors. Mug-style handles make them easy to grip. Available at www.gymboree.com. \$21.



▲ **Activity seats** — Evenflo's Exersaucer allows your baby to exercise those chubby legs and tummy by "standing" in a cloth seat that swivels 360 degrees for access to a variety of interactive toys that spin, twirl, rattle, and make music. The bottom platform is rounded to gently rock, and many models can be raised to grow with your baby. Themes include circus, cityscape, safari, jungle, and jam session. Available at area Target stores and target.com. \$50-\$120.



▲ **Blocks** — Babyhood isn't complete without blocks to stack and knock down and stack all over again. Uncle Goose Language Blocks add another dimension to the classic letters with raised textures, pictures, words, and math symbols. Bonus: They're available in English, Spanish, and Chinese. Available at Pottery Barn and www.potterybarnkids.com. Sets of 28-32 blocks. \$49.

Prices subject to change