

Seattle's Child

Your guide to a kid-friendly city

2024 A to Z Holiday Gift Guide

Editor's note: *This holiday gift list is not a paid advertising section. It reflects the research and opinions of the writer.*

Searching for the perfect holiday gift for a child in your life? This year's Holiday Gift Guide offers something for every age and interest. It's a long list, covering toys and gifts from A to Z! It offers ideas for gifts made or developed by local companies, celebrating life in the Pacific Northwest, sold by locally owned small businesses, benefitting local nonprofits, or recommended by two of our favorite local toy shops, [Clover Toys in Ballard](#) and [Snapdoodle Toys and Games](#) in Seattle, Kenmore and Redmond.

A

Acorn Sorting Game

The owners at Seattle's Clover Toys love Taylored Toys, a Vancouver, Washington-based wooden Montessori toymaker. For a sweet game with a toddler, they point to Taylored Toys' [Acorn Sorting Game](#). Says store co-owner Brittney Geleynse: "Their charming appearance and cute features make them visually appealing [and] they are a fantastic motivator for practicing essential math skills such as counting, addition, and simple division." Ages 3 and older. \$32.00. [Available in store or online at Clover Toys.](#)

All About Washington ABC Flash Cards

These delightful **ABC Flash Cards** are a great way for kids to practice their letters while learning about the state's animals, foods, cultures, and more. Ages 2 and up. \$14.99. Available from the [Pacific Northwest Shop](#).

Art classes

Give your child of any age the gift of expression through art. Seattle is home to numerous kid-focused **art classes**, schools, and instructors, many of them working artists. To find the right class for your child, check out "[18 Places for Kids to Paint, Sculpt, and Create Art](#)." All ages. Prices vary.

An animal to love

If your family has been thinking about **pet adoption**, and has the time and resources to commit to pet care, consider giving the gift of love to both an animal in need and your child. Search "pet adoption" for a shelter or adoption organization near you. And be sure to read "[Kids and pets: what to know before adopting an animal](#)" on our website to ensure your family is ready for a pet. All ages. Adoption fees apply at most shelters.

B

[Bear with Cubs Balancing Game](#)

Designed by Coast Salish artist Simone Diamond, this is a sweet stacking game. Kids stack bear cubs and salmon on the mama bear, practicing hand-eye coordination and learning colors and shapes. Careful placement and balance keep it all from toppling. Ages 4 and older. \$34.95. [Seattle Art Museum store](#).

For another version of this game with a few more stacking pieces, check out the **Wooden Ship Balancing Toy** at the locally-owned Two Owls shop. \$45. Ages 2 and older. In store or online at [Two Owls](#).

BFF!

BFF! is a tabletop role-playing game that is a sure winner for tween-age girls. The game explores the roles of a group of tween girls "hanging out, having adventures, and exploring how friendships grow and change," according to its Olympia-based developers at Heart of the Deericorn. It employs clever card prompts and emphasizes collaboration. There's no game master, therefore no nod to hierarchy. Ages 8 and older. \$15-\$49 from [Heart of the Deericorn](#).

Bopping bunnies game

The [Rainbow Bunny Bop game](#) was created by two Northwest moms, says Stephanie Luckerath at Snapdoodle Games and Toys. It's a colorful sequencing game where players race to build rainbows – through cooperation as well as competition. Ages 6 and older. \$12.99. [Available in store or online at Snapdoodle Toys and Games.](#)

Bubble Tea DIY Kit

Why go out for bubble tea when you can make it at home? This kit from The Works Seattle makes it easy for even young kids (4 and older with a parent) to make mouth-watering concoctions with sweet sugar boba. For older kids, it offers some of the history of bubble tea and easy-to-follow instructions, including how to make a popsicle version. \$39. Online at [The Works Seattle](#).

C

A stately card deck

Whether it's Go Fish, Crazy 8s, Hearts, or some other favorite, your family can enjoy a game with **Discover the Pacific Northwest Playing Cards**. The deck features 52 drawings of iconic locations in our region. Ages 5 and older. \$9.88. Available on [Amazon](#).

Cascadia Game

Not only is **Cascadia** created by local game designer Randy Flynn, it's all about the habitats and wildlife of the Pacific Northwest. What could be more fun than building your own terrain area and populating it with wildlife? It's a blast. Ages 10 and older. \$39.99. Available on [Amazon](#), at [Blue Highways Games](#) in Seattle and [Snapdoodle Toys and Games](#).

Chocolate outing and to eat

Or better yet, the promise of a chocolate outing or two or three! For a special holiday treat, sign up for a **Theo Chocolates Kids Chocolate Story Time** – Friday, Saturday or Sunday at 10 a.m. Ages 2-6 with chocolate tasting. \$12 per guest, maximum of 21 people per story time. [Register online](#).

For an elegant chocolate treat, our top picks for moms, dads and truly interested tweens and teens are from the magical confections at **Fran's Chocolates**, some of which support local charities including Neighborhood House and Safe Crossings. In the charitable line, we love **Fran's Dark Chocolate Sauce** (\$14). For a real splurge, there's the **Arctic Fox Advent Calendar** (\$295). Available at [Fran's boutiques in Seattle, Bellevue, University Village, and Georgetown](#) and [online](#).

Curiosities galore

For more than 120 years, strange and wonderful things have been available on the Seattle Waterfront. The trays, shelves, and nooks at [Ye Olde Curiosity Shop](#) are filled with animal bones, shells, and oddities that a kid with a curious mind is likely to find fascinating, gross, and delightful. Shrunken heads, scorpions suspended in plastic, an old padlock from Alcatraz, framed butterflies . . .it's a great place to collect stocking stuffers, particularly for scientifically minded kids ages 6 to 18. All ages. Prices vary, but fun can be found for less than \$15. Curiosities are available at the [Seattle Waterfront store](#).

Conscious Step Kids Socks

Kids like cats and dogs. Why not give them a gift that helps support these beloved animals (and many other causes)? Conscious Step socks are available at REI and other stores around Seattle and are a wonderful way to "give back." Youth socks \$10.95. Socks that fit teens \$15.95. Also available online at [Conscious Step](#).

D

Turn them on to Dungeons & Dragons

It's hard to believe that Dungeons & Dragons, the mega-popular role-playing game (RPG), turned 50 in 2024, but how better to celebrate than to introduce your kids? Step 1: Gift them the **2024 D&D Player's Handbook** (\$49.95), which spells out the rules. Next, register them in a **Blue Highway Games D&D Kids Campaign**, designed to help kids learn game rules and build characters. The store provides the necessary materials for all players. A one-month campaign (four sessions) for kids 8 to 11, \$120. Two-month campaigns (eight sessions) for kids 12 to 14, \$240. Register at [Blue Highway Games](#).

Duck push toys—a classic!

The first time my grandfather rolled Duckie across the floor in front of my 3-year-old feet, lo these 52 years ago, I was smitten. Duckie flapped the ground with leather feet as Grandpa quacked. Years later, my own kids loved Duckie just as much, almost as much as our pet cat. That simple toy brought decades of joy. Handcrafted in Fall City, the **Duck Runner Push Toy** is a throwback — and an invitation — to simple memories and simpler times. Ages 2 and older. Pricey at \$64.99, but likely to last several generations. Available in store and online at the **Pacific Northwest Shop** in Wallingford.

For about a third of that price, quack over to Snapdoodle Toys to find the **Quack & Flap Push Toy**. It's not made in the PNW, but it rolls just the same. "This cute duck has feet that make a great sound on wood floors," says Stephanie Luckerath, store assistant manager. Ages 2 and older. \$22.99.

E

Experiences

Do you really want to give them more STUFF? Why not give your kids the gift of adventure and togetherness? A **Pacific Science Center pass** for your curious kid, or a special outing with your teen (check out **Teen Tix** under T). How about a trip to **Seattle Aquarium's new Ocean Pavillion**? Or a family membership at **KidsQuest Children's Museum**, where innovative exhibits encourage learning about science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) through imaginative play. The possibilities are as diverse as your kids' interests, or your own. The cost of experiences vary, but the gift of an experience is priceless.

Eggs from the source

Did you know your family can keep up to eight domestic fowl on any lot in Seattle? Give your kids a future full of fresh eggs and fun by building a small chicken coop and bringing in chicks next spring. Want more information? Contact **Seattle Tilth** or go to **Backyard Chicken Seattle** to learn from others who have started coops. Raising chickens offers lessons in animal husbandry and responsibility.

F

Fun with field guides

Washington has a lot to offer when it comes to interesting ecosystems, wildlife viewing, and places to learn the natural history of the Evergreen State. The **Washington Nature**

Set Field Guide package from Acorn Naturalists will help you and your child map out hotspots for viewing wildlife and botanicals, and identify what you see. A great way to enjoy nature with kids of all ages. \$17.96. Online from [Acorn Naturalists](#).

The simplest flower press

The simplest gift idea on our list, the **Clover Toys Flower Press** is made especially for the Ballard toy store. At 5 x 9 inches, the laser-cut flower press can press some fairly large blossoms or other plant forms. It's made of draft board, recycled cardboard, and rubber bands – so simple. Age 3 and older. \$16. Available in store or online at [Clover Toys](#).

Fastrek: A game about camping

It's not from a local maker—[Fastrek](#) is a game developed in Finland. But it's about a decidedly Northwest activity: camping! Bring the thrill of trekking and camping to family game night with Fastrek, recommended by the game experts at Snapdoodle Toys and Games. Ages 5 and older. \$24.99. [Available in store and online at Snapdoodle](#).

Fair Trade: Local shops bring a world of gifts to you

This holiday season, step out of line at the big-box retailers and give your kids handmade gifts from local stores dedicated to ethically produced items from our region and around the world. Head to **Fair Trade Winds** in Ballard for an array. And at **Casita International** on Capitol Hill, their locally authored baby books, clothing, and other infant gifts will be welcome under the tree.

G

Get them going on a gnome game

The Puget Sound has a real “thing” for gnomes and trolls. Kids love looking for gnomes on the [Maple Valley Gnome Trail](#). And hunting for sculptor [Thomas Danbo's five PNW trolls](#) has become a popular family pastime.

Continue the love with the **Peaceable Kingdom Race to the Treasure! Cooperative Path Building Game**. It's not made in Washington, but it certainly has a theme local kids care about. Says Snapdoodle Toys Assistant Manager Stephanie Luckerath: “Peaceable Kingdom offers cooperative games where either everybody wins or nobody does.” Ages 4 and older. \$18.95. Available on [Amazon](#) and at [Snapdoodle Toys and Games](#).

Discover Geology together

GeoKidz geology worksheets and kits are designed for learning together. For a great stocking stuffer, check out the geology, fossil, land forms, volcanoes, and earth interiors workshops created by Lake Liberty-based geologist and GeoKidz co-owner Justin Rice. The Geology 101 worksheet packet is \$1.99 and individual worksheet sets are just 99 cents. Ages 5 and older with a parent, 12 and older on their own. Available online at [Geokidz](#).

H

A monster of a hat for tweens and teens

Each of Idaho knitter Trish Taylor's **Bigfoot/Sasquatch Hats** is a handmade work of art, not to mention individually named using different terms for the mythical beast. They are fun, unique, and make a proud PNW creature statement. Sizes are suitable for adults and older children (smaller sizes can be requested). \$49. Available on [Etsy](#).

Speaking of ... Say hello to the "Henry" Sasquatch plushies

The work of Ryan Henry Ward, who signs his colorful piece with the simple black-and-white moniker "Henry," can be found on more than 400 murals around Seattle. Kids love the artist's whimsical style and creatures, including Ward's version of **Sasquatch**. Ages 3 and older. \$27. Find it at [Itsahenry.com](#).

I

Indestructible books for babies and toddlers

These little tomes can be chewed on, taken in the bath and run through the washing machine or dishwasher. [Indestructible books](#) aren't made in the Pacific Northwest, but pretty closeby in California. "My bestie gave one to her son when his first child was born," says Snapdoodle Toys and Games Assistant Manager Stephanie Luckrath. "She turned 14 this year and it's been through all three of her siblings. . . Last summer, his wife threw it in the wash, ironed it and gave it to a new family." Available in store or online at [Snapdoodle Toys and Games](#).

Enroll them in the Imagination Library

With Imagination Library, the child will receive the free gift of a new book each month until their fifth birthday. The library was created by singer and literacy advocate Dolly Parton to encourage the love of reading in young children. It's easy to sign up; go to [the Imagination Library enrollment page](#) to get started.

Introduce them to ice skating

King County doesn't get much snow most years, but there is year-round ice in Seattle, Shoreline, Lynnwood, Kirkland, and other nearby cities. Not the least of these is the Kraken Community Iceplex, where you can give your kids the cold-weather tradition of ice skating lessons. [Kraken Community Iceplex](#) offers classes for ages 3 to adult and an adult-and-child class as well. All ages Prices vary.. [Lynnwood Ice Center](#) and [Sno-King Ice Arenas](#) in Snoqualmie and Renton also offer kid classes. Most arenas offer financial aid for those in need.

J

Very cool jigsaw puzzles

The holidays are about slowing down and being family and nothing slows kids down like a great puzzle. Our picks for puzzling this year are from Seattle-based Lantern Press, including its **[series of mini-shaped puzzles](#)** (\$12.99). And for weightier family fun, try the **[Mount Rainier National Park Bear Family in Field puzzle](#)** of 1,000 pieces. \$29.99. Ages 8 and up. Available from [Lantern Press](#).

And we still love Woodinville-based Bewilderness puzzles. This year the company's **[Burst of Color puzzles](#)** caught our eye with 140 to 160 pieces starting at \$36.95. Ages 8 and older.

Jewelry with a conscience

Is there a tween or teen in your house who loves rings and other jewelry? Check out the **[Oval Signet Ring with Hand-Engraved Birth Flowers](#)** at Aide-mémoire. All pieces are crafted from recycled precious metals (some chain exceptions) and the jewelers use only ethical, conflict-free diamonds and fair-trade gemstones. \$80. Available online or in store at [Aide-mémoire](#), in the Phinney neighborhood.

K

Go crazy on the Kracken

From shirts to hats to baby clothing, stuffed mascots and stickers, it's hard to go wrong with **Seattle Kracken gear**. You could shop the NFL store, but why instead support a locally-owned business. [Simply Seattle](#) offers something celebrating the region's beloved soccer team for everyone in your family. Or for a plushie of the official Seattle Kracken mascot (named Bouy), head to one of the region's Seattle Kracken Team Stores. All ages. Prices vary.

L

Crinkly learning lovey with a Seattle theme

The **Seattle Crinkle 8" Learning Lovey** caught the eye of Stephanie Luckrath at Snapdoodle Toys and Games. With ribbons and a crinkly sound, this mini-blanket and sensory toy screams Seattle with a fabric that includes the Space Needle, Pike Place Market, and Seattle Aquarium. Ages Newborn to 3. \$16. Available in store or online at [Snapdoodle](#).

Leatherbound journal to capture their thoughts

Keeping a journal is a useful way for tweens and teens to explore their thoughts, get creative with words, and jot down things that interest them. Encourage them with a very special journal. **KSWB Leather Journals** are beautiful, come in a variety of covers, and say to a growing mind: What you think matters. KSWB only uses tanned veggie leather, which is not chemically treated. \$48. Available online at [KSWB Leather](#) or in person at Pike Place Market.

Llama with a purpose

Llama pom-pom maker. It's an animal toy, work of art, and a fun grafting tool that invites kids to make yarn puffs and tassels for every occasion. The **Mirus Toys Wooden Pom Pom Maker** is a fun, creative option for children of all ages and it helps develop fine motor skills. \$12. Available at [Mirus Toys](#).

A closer look (at the stars and planets)

Give your child – or your whole family – the gift of viewing the natural world and universe up close. Seeing the stars doesn't have to cost thousands. The folks at Ballard's Cloud Break Optics say that for stargazing beginners, they love the **Celestron StarSense Explorer™ DX 102AZ Smartphone App-Enabled Refractor Telescope**. \$469.96. [Available at Cloud Break Optics](#). Or, a good set of **binoculars** starts around \$99. Available in store or online at [Cloud Break Optics](#). Be sure to bring your scope to

stargazing events held by **Seattle Astronomical Society** and learn from night sky experts! They'll have scopes for you to look through as well. Ages 8 and older, but all ages love the stars.

M

Make 'em Smile with Minter Goods

Amy Barr, the cork fabric artist behind Seattle-based Minter Goods, offers something bright and functional for everyone in the family. Sweet booties for the baby (\$51), cool cork earrings (\$34), wallets (\$26) for dad or teens, pouches for school supplies, make-up, and other uses. Available at Pike Place Market or online at [Minter Goods](#).

Make magicians out of them

Located in Pike Place Market since 1973, the **Market Magic Shop** is the oldest magic shop in the Pacific Northwest and third oldest in the country! It's a great place to find cards, coins, books, juggling equipment, tarot cards, clowning supplies, yoyos, jokes, gags, and more to introduce your magician-wannabe to the art of mystery and illusion.

N

Non-toys

You do not need to spend a lot of money to give great gifts. How about skipping the toys and offering your child a chance to create their own magic? Head to your local [Second Use](#), [Goodwill](#), or hardware store to load up on interesting low-cost bits and pieces of wood, piping, zip ties, odd nuts and bolts, strange doodads and building innards. Put it all in a series of boxes that lead to your toolbox with a holiday card that says, "Let's create!" All ages. Prices vary, but check unsaleable items bins to keep costs low. Need a different space to create? A membership at **Seattle Makers**, which offers both space for experimenting in DIY and also assistance, starts at \$75/month. Go to seattlemakers.org.

Nesh for your baby

Baby Nesh clothing was developed by Bootyland, a Seattle-based children's clothing store. It offers cute, comfortable pants, skirts, and dresses made of organic GOT-certified fabrics and up-cycled sweaters. Bright colors, great graphics (not that your baby will notice). Most starting at \$28. Available in store or online at [Bootyland](#).

New-to-them clothing and other great stuff

In these days of inflation, why spend an arm and a leg to put children's clothing under the tree? Most of the gently used items you'll find at **Childish Things** in North Seattle look brand new and it's never too soon to teach your kids the value of reusing well-treated belongings.. This little store packs a punch with hundreds of thoughtfully selected new-to-you items for sale, including maternity clothes, furniture, and more. Check all the boxes: Save money, save the environment, shop locally! Prices vary. Head to the store at 9776 Holman Rd NW, #102, Seattle, WA 98117

O

An Orca for bathtime

Designed by Coast Salish artist Chris Kewistep, **Oscar the Orca** is ready to dive into the tub with kids of all ages. Made with no phthalates, this little whale spouts when squeezed. Oscar and your kids might enjoy company—in the form of other Indigenous-designed bath toys, including a starfish, salmon, seal, shark, halibut and more. \$5.49. Available in store or online.

A new ornament for the tree

You see them everywhere these days, dancing at gas stations and sometimes in front yard holiday decorations. How about an air dancer for your holiday tree? Created by Snowmade in Oregon, these dancers come in five colors and two sizes. \$7. Available at Snowmade.

P

Promote sibling love

Tacoma-based clothing company Sweetpea & Boy have a great way for your kids to show their love—for each other. The **PB & J T-shirt set** allows one to be the peanut butter and the other the jelly in this sibling sandwich. Sizes 6 months to kids size 10. \$39 for the set. Available online at Sweetpea & Boy.

Let them choose from Pike Place Market

We always prefer shops to cards, but this little card offers the kid who receives it the chance to cruise one of Seattle's most iconic places with a parent or adult and to choose from a wide variety of shops. Purchases can be made at 100 businesses, including Orange Dracula, Pike Place Pigs, Yarn Dragon, The Raven's Nest collectibles, Careful It Bites stuffed creatures, Vida Loca Glass Beads, and more. Starting at \$5,

although a minimum of \$25 is a good idea if you want them to walk away with a gift. Buy online at [Pike Place Market](#).

Q

The Quiet Book

There are many places and ways to enjoy the quiet, as the adorable animals in **The Quiet Book** demonstrate. Written by Deborah Underhill, who was raised in Walla Walla, it's a gentle book exploring with children the importance of quiet. Hardcover \$11.66; board book \$7.19 on [Amazon](#).

Meet a queen

No, we are not expecting a visit from royalty in Seattle anytime soon. However, you can take your kids to visit the best queen in town: **Queen Mary Tea Room**. The winter holidays are a wonderful time to get dressed up and enjoy a tower of delights and a pot of tea during a high tea service. Best for ages 10 and up to truly enjoy the experience. \$61 weekdays, \$72 weekends (per person). For another tasty option, check out **Paisley Tea Room** (\$28 kids, \$62 adults) in Issaquah's Gilman Village.

Hand-sewn quilt

The **Washington Stars Quilt Guild**, based in Olympia, offers [handmade quilts](#) for sale and has a wonderful array of options, including designs your kids will love. Wrap them up in a unique quilt they'll love for many years. Check out the "Dinosaurs" quilt for \$100 and a selection of baby/kid quilts range between \$60 and \$200. Available online through [the guild](#).

R

Rivajam's Roll & Seek Nature Scavenger Hunt

This simple dice game was developed in Australia, but it's a wonderful way to explore and gain knowledge of the region outside your window or anywhere you go in nature. For kids ages 3 to 99, it's an opportunity to engage in conversation while increasing awareness of the beauty of nature. The game encourages kids to observe small details, identify shapes and colors, ask thought-provoking questions and, most important, to share the excitement of discovery with their friends. Great for outdoor play or camping. Ages 3 and older. \$29.99. From [Ravijam](#).

The best piggy bank in town and a great way to give back

The Rachel the Piggy Bank sculpture at Pike Place Market has always been a kid favorite. Start the tradition of giving your child a new tree ornament each year by wrapping a **Rachel the Ornament** for them this year. \$35. Proceeds go to the Pike Place Market Foundation. Then help them save up to buy a Rachel for a family member or friend next year with a handmade piggy bank from Stephanie Schull's Pike Place Pigs. Available at Pike Place Market or online at pikeplacepigs.com.

S

Shibori DIY kit

Introduce your kids to Shibori, the ancient Japanese art of folding and binding fabric and dyeing in an indigo vat to create unique textiles in deep shades of blue. This Seattle-made **Shibori DIY Kit** produces enough dye for around three yards of fabric, a step-by-step instructional guide and videos, and all necessary items to take you through the process. School age. \$45. Available online at The Works Seattle.

Storytellers Puppet Collection

Native Northwest's **Storytellers Puppet Collection** includes moose, beaver, orca, Bigfoot and numerous other colorful puppets designed by local Native Americans. All are ultra-soft with movable mouths, beaks, arms, and wings. \$32.99. All ages. Benefits the [Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre \(SLCC\)](http://Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC) in Whistler, BC) in Whistler, BC. Check out the whole collection at Native Northwest.

Stegosaurus onesie

Let's be honest. The baby doesn't notice what they are wearing. But the sweet **Seattle Stegosaurus onesie** from Casita International on Capital Hill offers ultimate cuteness as it combines two awesome things—dinos and Seattle. Printed in Seattle on 100% organic cotton with water-based ink. \$34. In store or online at Casita International.

Sensory Bin Tool Kit

Brittney Geleynse, Clover Toys co-owner with Ashley Church, says the two are big fans of Taylored Toys, a Vancouver, Washington-based wooden Montessori toymaker. One of their favorites this year is the **Wooden Sensory Bin Tool Kit**. "I am so excited to give my daughter this wonderful toy," says Geleynse. "It offers so many open-ended play

opportunities, allowing her creativity and imagination to flourish. I can already picture the two of us spending hours together, exploring different ways to play. It's not just a toy; it's a chance for us to bond and make lasting memories." Ages 3 and older. \$40. Available at [Clover Toys](#).

Simply Fun games

Bellevue-based game developer Simply Fun is on a mission to help develop young brains. The company's games are fun to play and they help bolster the life and educational skills kids are developing in the more structured settings of school and at home. Give the gift of face-to-face attention and togetherness. Our pick this year is **Time Jumpers**. Players "blast to the past" to explore awesome achievements of the 20th century. Ages 8 and older. \$39. Available online at [Simply Fun](#).

T

Tooth Fairy House

Give them a gift they will use for at least a couple of years and that you can hold onto and pass down to grandchildren. Each Tooth Fairy House, custom-made by Seattle artist Kirsti Ringger, has a special compartment for a little tooth. Ages 5 and older. Starting at \$14.99. Available on [Etsy](#).

Trees and Tracks Explorer

Local toymaker Mirus Toys has created what they call the ultimate nature companion for kids: the Wooded Double-Sided Trees and Tracks Explorer Window. This outdoor tool helps little trekkers identify trees and animal tracks in wild places. The toy series also includes trackers for the night sky, rocks and minerals, shells, flowers, and more. Available online at [Mirus Toys](#).

Get your teen a Teentix Pass

A **Teentix Pass** is free and allows any teenager (age 13-19) to purchase \$5 day-of-show tickets at more than 100 participating arts organizations in the greater Puget Sound region. Simply fill out a form to get a pass, then check out the TeenTix calendar for events available to you on a specific day or in a specific genre. Perhaps sign them up and stick the confirmation in their stocking, then refer them to the [TeenTix "how to" page](#) to learn the ins and outs of using it. Don't forget to go with them to a show.

U

Urchins anyone?

We admit it. U is a difficult toy letter. But then we thought “We live on a Sound in a state edged by the ocean; What’s more Northwest than sea urchins?” For urchin shells, head to [Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe](#) on the Seattle Waterfront or to Seattle’s [NW Rockhounds](#). For a toy, we recommend a visit to The Curious Bear Toy & Book Shop, based in Fircrest, Washington, to find Club Earth’s [Urchin Tumblers](#). Just throw the sticky urchins at a window and watch them race. Ages 3 and older. \$5.99. [Available online at The Curious Bear](#).

V

Very small things

1. We’ve brought the dollhouse back this year because it is such a classic toy—invite your child of any age to explore the world of small things in a dollhouse they build and decorate themselves (with your help, of course). A house can be as simple as a wooden box turned on its side or as one made from a [Miniature House DIY Kit](#). (\$44.99) from Snapdoodle Toys and Games. Along with the DIY dollhouse, give your child a handmade certificate for **Miniatures and More** in Edmonds, to choose an item they’d like to put into their tiny house. Prices vary, starting with the tiny tables at around \$8.

2. One more for very small things: **a knick knack shadow box**. Go online to Etsy, Ebay or other resale sites and nab an old printer’s box (the segmented boxes that printers used to keep letters in for creating newspapers and other printed things). Then head to your local thrift store to find just a few small knick knacks that represent your child or the knick knacks showing things they love. Their job is to fill each box with small found items—rocks, tiny toys, shells, tiny things they want to keep and showcase. Filling a shadow box together is a fun activity to share. Boxes run \$30 and up. Items can be free or purchased. But consider a limit of just a few dollars each.

W

Wishbone Menagerie Crocheted Toys

Pick any one or even all of the sweet animals in the **Wishbone Menagerie collection** including cats, bunnies, owls, and more. With floppy limbs, these animals are likely to

become beloved woobies dragged around for years. Ages Newborn and older. \$50. Available at Pike Place Market or online at [Wishbone Menagerie](#).

A world of wooden toys

Simple wooden toys tap a child's imagination the way plastic and electronic toys often don't. In fact, a study out of Eastern Connecticut State University found that when it comes to encouraging problem-solving, creativity, and positive social interactions, simpler toys are best. More durable than most plastic toys, well-made wooden toys are often safer and more sustainable. Find them at [Mirus Toys](#) and [Northwest Alpine](#). (Check out "[The wonder of wooden toys](#)" at [Seattleschild.com](#).) While local makers are limited, there are national wooden toymakers ready to support your child's imagination, including Odin Parker toys, Melissa & Doug, and Lovevery (for kids newborn-4). Our pick for this year's wooden toy from Mirus is [The Moon Phases Wiccan Wheel of the Year](#). \$69.95.

Get them reading with Washington State Book Award Winners

Cover all the kids in your house with this year's winners of the [Washington State Book Awards](#) contest. These titles are sure to please readers of different ages and stages.

Picture Books:

- **Award winner:** "Ploof" by Ben Clanton and Andy Chou Musser of Seattle (Tundra Books)
- "And Then Comes School" by Tom Brenner of Vashon Island, illustrated by Jenn Hill (Candlewick Press)
- "Drake the Super-Excited, Overeager, In-Your-Face Snake" by Michaele Razi of North Bend (Little Bigfoot, an imprint of Sasquatch Books)
- "In the Dark" by Kate Hoefler, Illustrated by Corinna Luyken of Olympia (Random House Children's Books)
- "Maurice" by Jessixa Bagley of Seattle (Chronicle Books)
- "The Story of a Book" by Joy McCullough of Shoreline, illustrated by Devon Holzwarth (Atheneum Books for Young Readers/Simon & Schuster)

Books for Young Readers:

- **Award winner:** "Duel" by Jessixa Bagley, illustrated by Aaron Bagley of Seattle (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers)
- "Alebrjjes: Cuentista" by Donna Barba Higuera of Poulsbo (Levine Querido)
- "The Beautiful Something Else" by Alder Van Otterloo of Bremerton (Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic, Inc.)

- “Code Red” by Joy McCullough of Shoreline (Atheneum Books for Young Readers/Simon & Schuster)
- “The Nighthouse Keeper” by Lora Senf of Spokane (Atheneum Books for Young Readers)
- “The Year My Life Went Down the Toilet” by Jake Maia Arlow of Seattle (Dial Books For Young Readers/Penguin)

Young Adult Literature:

- **Award winner:** “Painted Devils” by Margaret Owen of Seattle (Henry Holt Books for Young Readers, c/o Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group)
- “Enter the Body” by Joy McCullough of Shoreline (Dutton Young Readers/Penguin Random House)
- “The Golden Needle” by T.J. Carroll of Snohomish County (Cumberstone Press)

Call ahead to your locally owned bookstore to ensure these books are in stock. All are available on Amazon.

X

We’ve done xylophones for years. This year, we’ve decided to jump on the video bandwagon, good old Redmond-based Microsoft Xbox fans. If you’ve got tweens and teens who love to game, especially with you, [the Xbox Series S console](#) offers a world of options. All ages with parent participation. \$299. Available online on Amazon and directly through Microsoft.

Check out Xbox games age **PEGI ratings** to find age-appropriate content and games:

- **PEGI 3:** Suitable for children ages 3 or older
- **PEGI 7:** Suitable for children ages 7 and older
- **PEGI 12:** Suitable for children ages 12 and older
- **PEGI 16:** Suitable for teenagers ages 16 and older
- **PEGI 18:** Suitable for adults ages 18 and older
- **PEGI !:** Parental guidance recommended

Y

Yarn and knitting or crocheting classes

Knitting and crocheting are age-old arts that help improve finger dexterity and are great ways to get kids to slow down, spend quiet creative time, and learn a useful skill. These arts are not limited to any gender. Did you know our own columnist David Turner (David the Docent) is an accomplished knitter? Our pick for great yarn and lessons is **Acorn Street Shop** where Crocheting 101 and Knitting 101 classes start at \$80. Yarn costs vary. Visit the store just north of University Village or check out yarn and classes [online](#).

Z

Give them a zoo (and an aquarium)

The best gifts are the ones that are not only fun for your kids, but support a good cause, like animal conservation. Give them the gift of **a year of zoo visits** by becoming a member at the **Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium** in Tacoma or the **Woodland Park Zoo** in Seattle. Becoming a member family has benefits – including a lot of savings on multiple trips, discounts in the zoo shops, and advance information about wonderful holiday events like **WildLanterns display** (at WPZ now through January 19, 2025) or PDZA's **Zoolights** display (now through January 5, 2025). All ages. Point Defiance Zoo family memberships start at \$180. Woodland Park Zoo family passport membership costs \$260.

P.S. We know that “aquarium” goes under A but since we're talking creatures, consider putting a family membership to the **Seattle Aquarium** under your tree this year and help continue the aquarium's marine conservation efforts.

More at Seattle's Child:

"Give experiences not things this year"

"Check out the holiday lights displays 2022"