

your must-have
guide to {politely}

Requesting Plastic-Free Toys



Hello, nature-loving friend!

In a world full of plastic and disposable products, raising kids naturally and sustainably isn't easy. It's downright tough.

As a mom, toymaker, and business owner, I'm often asked, "How do I graciously ask my family and friends that they **not** gift my kids cheap, plastic toys?"

I struggled with this very same question for years. So I dug deep, did the research, and got creative. And I'm so excited to share it all here with you. From how to bring up this sometimes sensitive topic with family, to playful rhymes for your party invites, to plastic-free children's brands (with exclusive discount codes!), it's all here.

First-time expecting mom? Planning your toddler's birthday party? **This guide is for you.** Facing yet another post-holiday "hangover" of played-with-once-and-forgotten cheapo toys around your house? Just trying to simplify your family's life and be good to the earth? **This guide is for you.** Whatever the reason, we've got you covered.

The world needs more love, more time for play, and more trees. Not more plastic. Are you with me?! Let's do this.

smiles,

Kathleen

Kathleen
Smiling Tree Toys co-founder and mama to four little tree huggers

table of contents

- 04 10 Plastic-Free Talking Points
- 06 Rhymes for Party Invites and the Holidays
- 09 Plastic-Free Alternative Materials
- 10 11 Fabulous Plastic-Free Children's Brands
- 12 Online Registries To Curate Your Own Plastic-Free Wish List or Baby Registry
- 13 Additional Resources



"Kids don't need all the things.
Let's give them meaningful, long-lasting toys that encourage creativity, create lifelong memories, and green the earth for all kids to come."

10 plastic-free talking points

Worried that requesting particular gifts might come across as selfish or snotty?

I get that.

The next time you want to ask for plastic-free toys, try one of these approaches:



3. Good quality, eco-friendly wooden toys don't contain PVC, phthalates, or other chemicals that can leach from plastic toys and be really bad for kids.

1. One of the main reasons we're asking for plastic-free toys is because buying fewer plastic toys is better for the environment. By 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than there are fish. And we don't want to contribute to that. (source: *The Ocean Conservancy*)

4. There's a lot of reports out there linking hormone disruption with the chemical bisphenol A (BPA) which is commonly used in plastics.

2. The chemicals in plastic toys can interfere with a child's development, so choosing natural alternatives such as wood is a great way to ensure kids aren't unnecessarily exposed to harmful toxins.

5. I want my children to have a safe and healthy start in life; one that includes natural, long-lasting wooden toys to promote learning, inspire creativity, and let their imaginations run wild.



6. We're limiting the number of gifts this year because we're hoping to keep the sheer number of toys to a minimum. This will help the children understand and appreciate the value of the toys they do have.

7. I know you love to spoil your grandchild and that's fine. But wouldn't you rather spoil them with toys that we're sure are safe and will last a long time?

8. We've tried really hard to eliminate any potential lead exposure in our home. It'd be great if you could help us by not giving any plastic toys.

9. I know you mean well, but we'd really appreciate you honor our wishes and not gift any toys made of plastic. We'd prefer if you gave them something from [insert favorite shop here].

10. If going plastic-free for gift giving doesn't seem doable this year, that's fine. Bringing gifts is totally optional and we don't mind one bit!

It's rhyme time! We've created six playful rhymes for requesting plastic-free gifts for various occasions. All you need to do is copy, paste, share, and you're done!

Bonus: a good rhyme is memorable and can lighten the mood.



BIRTHDAY rhymes

Now a gift certainly isn't required,
Just being there will ensure [CHILD'S NAME] feels loved and inspired.
If you choose to bring a gift to the party,
We graciously ask that it be plastic-free.
Because what better way to celebrate [CHILD'S NAME]'s birth,
Then with toys that last and don't harm the earth?
The toys that [CHILD'S NAME] loves are plastic-free,
And preferably made from a tree!
We know this request is quite ambitious,
So we thank you for doing your best to honor our wishes.



Before you ask, we just want to say,
A gift isn't needed to celebrate [CHILD'S NAME]'s big day.
But if you're keen to bring something,
Consider a toy made of wood.
They're safe for kids, good for the earth,
and make for a memorable childhood!
We politely ask this not just for our child,
But for kids everywhere.
Let's pass on to them a planet that's healthy and green,
And show them that we care!

BABY SHOWER rhymes

If you're thinking of giving a gift for our new little one,
We'd be thrilled to receive something that's
natural, safe, and of course, fun!
Plastic-free are the types of toys we desire,
If you'd like to know more, please enquire.
Because what better way to celebrate this birth,
Then with toys that last and don't harm the earth?
Check out our all natural baby registry at
[REGISTRY NAME OR LINK].

We're so excited for this new bundle of joy.
What better way to celebrate than with a new toy?
If you're unsure what to purchase, then fret not.
We've put together a registry, so X marks the spot.
On the list, you'll find lots of products made from wood.
Because we love the earth and want to do some good.
Please consider for our little one,
Wooden toys that are safe, long-lasting, and full of fun!
Check out our eco-friendly baby registry at
[REGISTRY NAME OR LINK].

CHRISTMAS/HOLIDAY rhymes

It's the most magical time of the year!
Before you start shopping,
We'd like to tell you we're swapping,
Plastic toys for wooden toys.
For all the good girls and boys.
Yes, we're going plastic-free.
Beneath the Christmas tree.
We'd love for you to also take part,
In this new tradition we're so excited to start!
Plastic-free toys are what we're after,
Because they're safe, long-lasting,
and sure to bring laughter.

Happy holidays to you!
This year we'd like to try something new.
We're saying goodbye to toys made of plastic.
Which we hope you'll agree is fantastic.
Wooden toys are better overall,
Especially for little ones who are oh-so-small.
Please gift [CHILD'S NAME] a wooden toy.
It will fill our family (and Mother Earth)
with so much joy!



Choosing to go plastic-free can feel super overwhelming. But it doesn't have to be. The toughest part? Just getting started.

6 PLASTIC-FREE ALTERNATIVES

HERE ARE SIX PLASTIC-FREE ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS WE LOVE. EXPLORE ONE OR MORE TO GET STARTED ON YOUR JOURNEY TO A PLASTIC-FREE CHILDHOOD FOR YOUR LITTLES.

WOOD

Wood is a fabulous alternative to plastic. As tree-hugging, wood toymakers we might be a little biased, but solid wood is natural, renewable, and biodegradable. Choose wood for your little one's toys, teething rings, and playroom/bedroom furniture. If you're reading this, odds are you already love wooden toys. But if you need a little backup to convincing others to ditch plastic and choose wood, check out our many reasons [why wooden toys are better than plastic ones](#).

COTTON

Cotton is a natural fiber that's also hypoallergenic. This is perfect when it comes to dolls and clothing.

FELT

Felt is often overlooked but makes SUCH a great toy alternative because it's very resilient to wear and tear. Think of felt when you're on the search for pretend food for your little one's play kitchen.

STAINLESS STEEL

When it comes to drinkware and eating utensils, stainless steel is a given! Swap any plastic sippy cups and food ware for stainless steel to avoid plastic leaching and unnecessary consumption.

BAMBOO

Bamboo is a highly renewable, natural material that has antibacterial, antifungal properties and is biodegradable. You can explore all types of products made of bamboo from clothing and bed sheets to toys to food and drinkware.

NATURAL FIBERS

Natural fibers are great because they usually have a much smaller environmental impact than synthetic fibers and plastic. This is because the production process for natural fibers uses fewer chemicals than those of synthetic textiles. When you choose clothing, toys, rugs, and nursery decor made from natural fibers, you're greatly reducing the risk of your baby being exposed to toxins in your home.



FINN+EMMA
children's clothing

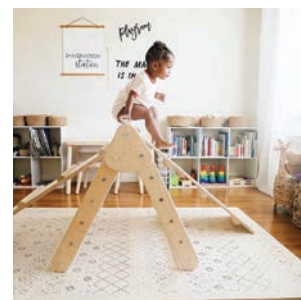
Finn + Emma's garments are made with buttery soft, G.O.T.S. certified organic cotton and non-toxic, eco-friendly dyes. Garment snaps are lead/nickel free and feature real coconut inserts. Their clothing also has a generous fit—allowing them to be worn for longer—and accommodates for cloth as well as disposable diapers.



UNDER THE NILE
children's clothing

We love Under the Nile's cute organic clothes and their side snap baby outfits offer a fuss free and comfortable fit. Even better? They're "committed to providing the highest quality baby clothes in a sustainable and socially responsible manner, while demonstrating authenticity and transparency in our business practices."

10% off code:
EVERGREEN10



LILY & RIVER
wooden furniture

Lily & River is taking over social media with their fun Little Mobile (a wooden and silicone mobile) and their Little Climber (which grows with your baby from 6 months to 5-years-old).

SPROUT KIDS
wooden furniture

Sprout Kids offers a wide-variety of timeless wooden montessori-inspired furniture made in America. They're passionate about giving children accessibility and freedom that grows with them.



10% off code: SPROUT10

eleven FABULOUS

Plastic-Free Children's Brands

These companies create earth-friendly baby products that'll cover many of your newborn needs. And we've already vetted to ensure they're truly earth friendly and walk their talk. So feel great about supporting these small brands while staying true to your green roots and eco-conscious lifestyle!



CUDDLE+KIND
stuffies + dolls

Cuddle + Kind is a fan favorite, and for good reason! This family of five offers lovingly handcrafted heirloom dolls that are non-toxic and ethically produced. Cuddle + Kind also gives 10 meals to children in need with every doll sold.



OLLI ELLA USA
stuffies + dolls

Their Small Folk Collection is beyond adorable! They make a wide range of items that celebrate imaginative play, and are durable, timeless. From wooden bottles to 100% natural Rattan rattles, baskets, and more.



BEES WRAP
food + drinkware

Ever heard of reusable food wraps? Bees Wrap makes washable, reusable food wraps using organic cotton and beeswax. Bonus: They're also all about giving back and ending plastic pollution.

PIP & J PAPERY
miscellaneous



Love flash cards? Pip & J's Animal ABC + 123 Flash Cards are hand illustrated with watercolors.. And each letter and number shows motions for tracing to learn proper letter/number formation. Pair this with our animal alphabet blocks and your child will be spelling in NO time!

Save 15% with code:
EVERGREEN15

Many of the brands featured here were kind enough to offer a discount code for you to use when shopping with them.

Enjoy!

TOKI MATS
miscellaneous

Toki Mats children's play mats consist of one fabric cover with two side zip openings, and two natural latex foam inserts. The waterproof covers are optional, and come as a set of two zippered covers. The outer cover is 100% cotton fabric. The inner foam is 1" of 100% natural dunlop latex foam. The waterproof covers are 100% bamboo jersey fabric.

Save \$10 with code STT10



SMILING TREE TOYS
wooden toys + teethers

If you're looking for long-lasting, high quality wooden toys and teethers then you'll love what we have to offer here at Smiling Tree Toys! Our vision is to create lifelong memories for families while greening the earth for all kids to come. We do this by designing and creating keepsake wooden toys that inspire creative and imaginative play, and planting a tree for every toy we sell.

Some of the best parts of our wooden toys and teethers are their timeless quality and earth friendly nature. Our thoughtful designs, sustainable woods, and organic finish mean the wooden toys we make are safe, inspirational, and will last a lifetime.

Wait. teethers made out of wood?! Yes, indeed! Watch our short video all about why wood is one of the best and safest teething options for babies.

Save 10% on your next Smiling Tree Toys order using the code: PLASTICFREE

ONLINE REGISTRIES

to curate your own plastic-free wish list or registry

If you want to be sure to receive products you'll actually use (and love!) then consider curating your own plastic-free wish list or baby registry.

These three online registries let you add items from ANYWHERE online.



BABYLIST

Baby List makes it super easy to start your own all natural baby registry for free, and the ones you love can find your registry with a simple search. Plus, you can put anything you want (from any store, even small businesses like Smiling Tree Toys) onto your Baby List.

SOKIND REGISTRY

SoKind Registry is unlike most registries because they're all about "more fun, less stuff." This registry allows you to request things that aren't even physical ecommerce products (like home cooked meals, cloth diaper lessons, etc.)

MY REGISTRY

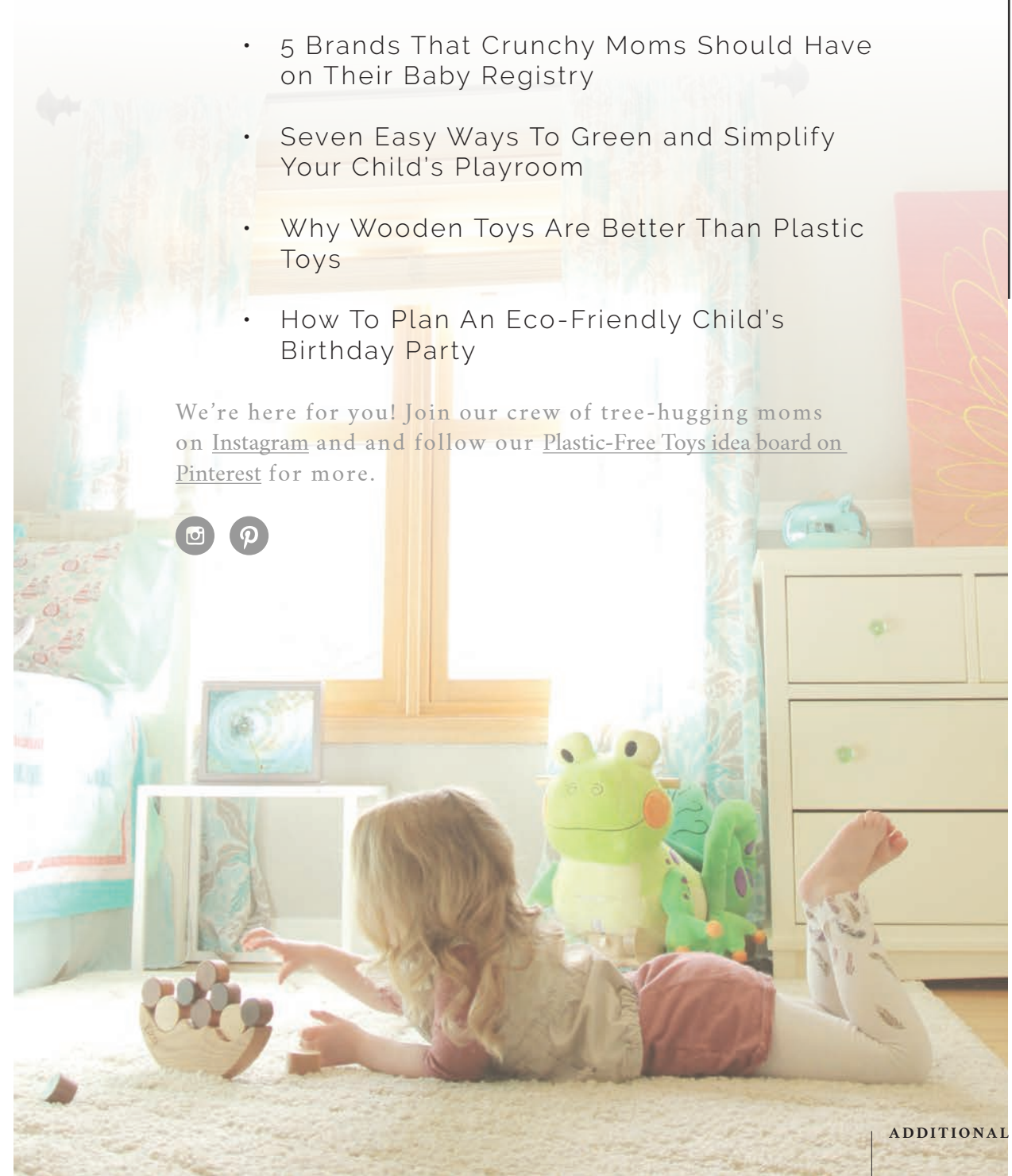
My Registry can be used for any occasion that needs a registry (baby shower, birthday, weddings, you name it!). What's cool about My Registry is that you can download their handy little bookmark widget and add literally anything for sale on the Internet to your registry with the click of a button.

want **MORE?**

We've got it! The Reading Nook is Smiling Tree Toys' blog for natural moms who love simple and sustainable living. Check out these best-loved posts:

- Becoming A Minimalist Mom
- 5 Brands That Crunchy Moms Should Have on Their Baby Registry
- Seven Easy Ways To Green and Simplify Your Child's Playroom
- Why Wooden Toys Are Better Than Plastic Toys
- How To Plan An Eco-Friendly Child's Birthday Party

We're here for you! Join our crew of tree-hugging moms on [Instagram](#) and follow our [Plastic-Free Toys idea board on Pinterest](#) for more.



additional resources



SHOP BESTSELLERS
www.smilingtreetoys.com