

## First Toddle® Frequently Asked Questions



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**Q-1:** What exactly is First Toddle?

**A-1:** First Toddle is “The 5-in-1 Infant/Toddler Play, Entertainment and Development System.” It gives babies a fun and safe environment in which to learn to stand and walk. Emphasizing **gross motor skills**, First Toddle stimulates a baby’s creativity and improves **cognitive development**. As a baby grows, First Toddle’s advanced play features and accessories expand and change to entertain for months and years to come – infant play, stable support for new toddlers, advanced toddler play, & sports. First Toddle also helps children with Special Needs. It really is play-based growth and fun, all in one easy package.

**Q-2:** What does “5-in-1” mean?

**A-2:** Last year we approached many retail buyers with an early First Toddle prototype, asking them how they could see our (at the time) “3-in-1” development system at retail. The feedback was fabulous, and our current product reflects much of that input. What’s more, a few retailers and toy industry specialists thought that First Toddle was really a 5-in-1 or even a 6-in-1 product. One retailer even suggested that they could see First Toddle positioned in multiple departments in a store: baby products, toys, sporting goods.

So, very simply, “5-in-1” for us refers to:

1. Infant Play Area – A comfortable and safe play area for a baby to crawl, explore, discover, and continue to develop hand-eye coordination and other sensory skills.
2. Baby’s First Steps – A safer environment for a baby to stand and take their first steps.
3. Toddler Cruise and Walk – A comfortable and fun area for a new toddler to play and safely practice new skills.
4. Sports Center – A great way to safely introduce children to the sports that we’ve all enjoyed for years – football, basketball, soccer, hockey, gymnastics, and more. We even have other accessories coming out later this year for other sports, including golf, lacrosse, field hockey and cricket (the last two inspired by a retailer in India).
5. Special Needs – A safe and stable structure for children who need a bit more support.

**Q-3:** What's included with the First Toddle "5-in-1 play, entertainment, and development system"?

**A-3:** The basic components are:

1. Toddle Walk Structure – A system of colorful tubes and fittings that provide the overall stable (yet flexible) support structure – the upper horizontal bars, vertical telescopic end supports (that allow for the adjustability of the height of the upper horizontal bars), and the wide horizontal base supports. The tubes and fittings consist of bright, primary colors that children love and that stimulates their development – blue, red, yellow and green.
2. Play Floor Mat – A soft mat that provides a comfortable play surface and, through the 4 corner straps, keeps the Toddle Walk Structure stable on most any surface. The mat is available in two accent colors – basically a white, quilted mat with either pink edging and corner straps or light-blue edging and corner straps.
3. Activity Table – A soft yet sturdy table that provides a raised play area at either end of the Toddle Walk Structure. The Table safely attaches with 3 Velcro straps.
4. Toddle Tent and Crawl-Thru – A safe rectangular mesh net that converts the Toddle Walk Structure into a tent or crawl-thru, something that children absolutely love.
5. Mini Basketball Backboard, Hoop, and Net – A fun and safe introduction to basketball that can be attached to the Toddle Walk Structure in multiple ways – with the Structure either horizontal or vertical for a more challenging game of indoor basketball. The net on the hoop is designed so the ball won't fall through immediately – letting a little one appreciate what they've just accomplished.
6. Sports Ball Set – Both a football and a basketball (which also serves as a ball for soccer or hockey). The balls are the perfect size for an infant or toddler – or even an older child – and come in either pink-and-white or blue-and-white with a sheen, vinyl cover.
7. Mini Soccer/Hockey Goal – Made from the same colorful tubes and fittings as the Toddle Walk Structure, and the same mesh net as the Toddle Tent and Crawl-Thru, this is a great way to introduce an infant or toddler to soccer or hockey.
8. Mini Hockey Stick – Made from the same material as the Activity Table and very safe. Can also be used as a golf club (depending on a parent's sports interests!).
9. Large Soccer/Hockey Net – Made from the same mesh net as the Toddle Tent and Crawl-Thru, this is a great way to really turn First Toddle into a safe play area for older children, improving the longevity and usefulness of the product.
10. Soft Play Toys – Two lightweight, cloth bears (one white, one blue) that can be suspended from the upper horizontal bars via a Velcro strap extending from the bears.
11. Soft Velcro Straps – A set of either pink or blue cloth straps with Velcro attachments that allow you to suspend other lightweight cloth or plastic play items from the upper parallel bars or elsewhere on the Toddle Walk Structure. Every

- home has these items from the crib or around the house – a great way to make First Toddle even more enjoyable for a child.
12. “The First Toddle Child Development Guide” – An overview of early childhood development – from 0 to 3 months, 3 to 6, 6 months to a year, etc. – and a set of tips and techniques to help parents help their children get started with First Toddle and get the most out of it over the long term.
  13. Assembly Instructions.
  14. Reusable, Carry-All Box – The box is designed with a closable locking lid and a handy carry strap for easy storage and travel.

**Q-4:** Is First Toddle easy to assemble, disassemble, and change configurations between all these components?

**A-4:** Absolutely. The entire set can be assembled in a matter of a minute or two. The Toddle Walk Structure snaps together very easily and adjustments are as simple as pressing plastic spring fasteners. Nets are attached very easily and secured with either sewn-in loops or Velcro straps.

Disassembly for storage is just as easy.

First Toddle is easy for parents to assemble and disassemble, but difficult for younger children to take apart.

**Q-5:** Does a consumer have to buy everything at once?

**A-5:** We’re selling First Toddle as a 5-in-1 product, so everything I mentioned -- everything necessary to entertain and help from infancy through toddlerhood (and beyond) -- is included.

We’re considering converting to a few products in the future, for example, starting with “First Toddle Essentials” (the Toddle Walk Structure, Play Floor Mat, and some infant accessories) and then offering “First Toddle Sports” (all the sports accessories I mentioned), and “First Toddle Advanced” (other more advanced accessories that older children enjoy).

Of course, the most important component would be “First Toddle Essentials” and the Toddle Walk Structure – and then everything else would build on that.

But, right now we’re still an all-in-one product.

**Q-6:** Are you planning on offering any add-on items?

**A-6:** Yes, we're working on several advanced accessories that will continue to improve First Toddle's usefulness and longevity. For example, plastic accessories that will convert the Toddle Walk Structure into a desk – perfect for a kindergartner or budding young architect to color or draw.

In the area of Special Needs, we're working on "First Toddle Pro" – a set specifically designed for pediatric physical therapists and other professionals who help older children.

**Q-7:** What about cleaning First Toddle?

**A-7:** Cleaning is a snap. Any antibacterial spray is all that's required to clean all the plastic components and the vinyl balls, and the fabric materials (Play Floor Mat, netting, straps) are all machine washable. The Assembly Instructions include everything you need to know about cleaning First Toddle.

**Q-8:** What was your motivation to create First Toddle?

**A-8:** I was a work-at-home dad with twins – a boy and girl at about 8 months of age when I developed the original prototype. There I was – doing e-mails and conference calls, and caring for twins -- feedings, diaper changes, and trying to keep the children from hurting themselves as they started more and more to explore the living room.

So, I scoured the garage and built the original First Toddle prototype – a simple set of parallel bars (with a very wide supporting base structure) made out of PVC pipe and fittings. I also tied some of our children’s favorite lightweight crib items to the upper parallel bars with shoelaces and then changed and rearranged the items frequently to keep it interesting for them.

We were amazed! The kids had more fun with that basic set of parallel bars than they had with any of the other store-bought toys we had for them in the living room – the playpen, the battery-operated swing, the jumper-saucer.

Then, we sat back and watched for the next year-and-a-half as they continued to use First Toddle in creative ways – ways I hadn’t anticipated and well beyond the initial intent. Turning it into a tent by draping a blanket over it, using it as a ballet bar and for “toddler gymnastics”, turning it on it’s end to make a more challenging game of basketball, etc., etc.

And, that’s how most of the current accessories were designed – based on our children’s (and other children’s) experimentation and fun. Children are instinctively very creative.

**Q-9:** Did you say the original prototype was made from PVC? Isn’t PVC dangerous for children?

**A-9:** Yes, the original prototype was made from PVC. It was only later that we learned of the potential harmful effects of PVC (even though drinking water comes to most of our homes through PVC pipe). Today, First Toddle is custom-extruded and molded from baby-safe plastic – there are no leads, no paints, no BPAs, and no PVC.

**Q-10:** Are there alternatives to First Toddle?

**A-10:** In many ways, yes, there are alternatives. You can purchase an infant activity play gym that helps your baby with hand-eye coordination and other entertainment from the time they’re 3- to, maybe, 6-months old. Then, as your child is able to sit-up and crawl, you can buy a jumper gym or jumper-saucer that maintains their interest for another 2 to

3 months. Then you can buy a walker or similar play item that helps them as they're learning to walk.

And, as is common in many households with children, several of these play items are simultaneously strewn about the living room.

On the other hand, First Toddle entertains a child for a much longer period – throughout vital developmental years. And, multiple children – siblings – let's say a 2-year-old and a 1-year-old - can enjoy First Toddle at the same time. And that's something you can't say about an infant activity play mat or jumper-saucer or similar.

**Q-11:** Are there any other differences between First Toddle and some of these other toys?

**A-11:** Well, in the case of a jumper-saucer, the child is actually sitting in a harness surrounded by a circular table with all sorts of play items and learning tools all within reach. While there certainly is value coming from this kind of product, the child is really a captive customer, and that may be exactly what a parent wants – so constant parental supervision isn't necessary. But, many children quickly tire of being constrained in this way.

On the other hand, there is no harness with First Toddle. In fact, we specifically did not include a harness, encouraging a child to reach in, explore, touch, learn and safely experiment.

**Q-12:** Are there any benefits to this freedom of movement?

**A-12:** Yes. First, as with most children's toys, adult supervision is recommended. But, I know many parents can attest to the fact that when an infant starts experimenting with standing and maybe beginning to take their first steps, an adult seems to spend a good amount of time bent over at the waist following a child around the house. It's also common for an infant to experiment by clutching the sofa cushions or the coffee table as they make their way around a living room (kind of like "infant furniture surfing"). And this could be dangerous, especially given the hard, sharp edges of a coffee table or the tile borders around a sunken living room.

First Toddle, on the other hand, provides a much safer environment than simply exploring the living room. It maintains a child's interest and provides a safe and stable support structure that still gives the child a sense of freedom of movement.

So, First Toddle provides a safe, supportive environment for a child, entertains them in creative ways that maintains their interest, allows them basic freedom of movement that's

important in early childhood development, and provides peace-of-mind to parents about their child's safety.

**Q-13:** Does First Toddle meet the appropriate safety standards?

**A-13:** Yes, First Toddle has passed all the required certification tests. There are no leads, no paints, and no BPAs. It's strong, stable and safe.

**Q-14:** How strong and stable is First Toddle?

**A-14:** It's very strong – the overall structure in a horizontal position was rated up to 130 pounds when the testing lab decided to stop increasing the weight. From their perspective, First Toddle far exceeded their testing standards for strength.

It's also very stable. Through design testing with my children and many other children, we learned that the ideal base needed to be only twice as wide the upper width (about 18" base for the same 9" upper width). We settled on three times as wide (27" base for a 9" upper width) to ensure the core stability and improve manufacturing simplicity (interchangeability of parts and the molds and dies required to make those parts) as well as to allow for the design of accessories, like the tent/crawl-thru and the large soccer or hockey net.

**Q-15:** How much room does First Toddle require?

**A-15:** When fully set-up, First Toddle takes up about 6-7 square feet of floor space – about the same area as a playpen or battery-operated swing. The important space-saving advantage of First Toddle is that it replaces other toys. So, instead of having an infant activity mat, a jumper-saucer and a swing at the same time, First Toddle is all that's necessary to entertain a child from 3 months to 3 years and beyond. And, First Toddle is so easily assembled and disassembled that it can be quickly stowed in its compact reusable box and stored under a bed or in a closet.

**Q-16:** I understand that First Toddle also helps children with Special Needs. What are the benefits?

**A-16:** Initially I was merely trying to give our twins a safer environment where they could creatively entertain themselves in the living room – and perhaps more safely learn to stand and walk. It was only later, when talking with our children's Pediatrician, that it became obvious that children with developmental difficulties could also be helped.

Since then we've been working with two pediatric physical therapy clinics in the Phoenix area and have seen outstanding results. One clinic specializes in early childhood intervention, helping children from 0 to 3 years of age. The other clinic focuses on older children with walking and other developmental challenges.

The physical therapists have reported back to us that not only is First Toddle excellent for gross motor skills, but also they're seeing significant improvement in children's spatial orientation, improved cognitive development, and even improvements in linguistic skills.

The PTs say that a child, simply being able to support themselves (even within First Toddle's upper parallel bars), is encouraged and realizes much-improved short- and long-term development opportunities.