

Success With Kid Stuff

- > Determine if you are committed to attracting children to your store. Then, **consider how kid friendly your store is.** If you want children to come, enjoy themselves and shop, you have to take steps to develop your kid quotient.
- > Find something small and inexpensive you can use as a giveaway to all children who come into your store. A balloon and a bit of helium will **make a lasting impression** on any youngster.
- > Remember that adults will select most purchases made for very young children, but **older children take great pride in making their own selections.**
- > Display your children's **products at kids-eye level** whenever possible, and don't stress over a messy children's department. Most parents recognize that having children around means things occasionally are in disarray.
- > Take time to greet your young customers, and **make a big deal out of their being in your store.** The memories you create will last a lifetime.



Socks are also an important sell-along with boots.

A basic line of children's Western boots is a staple for most stores. Keep in mind, however, that nothing grows faster than a child's foot. Parents and grandparents are uppermost concerned about price point.

Children—especially little girls—are mostly concerned about color. They prefer pink.

Heavy-duty boots have been a primary product for most children's footwear displays over the past couple of years. The pink children's chuckka from Double H Boots comes in an all-leather upper, cushioned insole and TractLite outsole. A splashy palate of colors for children's footwear continues to be attractive to consumers. www.doublehboots.com

[4] Saddles and Tack—Nothing attracts the interest of young riders like a display of saddles made especially for them. Most English and Western saddle-makers have discovered the secret and go to great lengths to provide a product that's long-lasting as well as functional.

Most consumers are generally willing to pay the price for a high-quality children's saddle because it will retain its resale value. However, there is always that segment of shopper who wants inexpensive and plans to dispose of the saddle eventually.

English saddles in children's sizes are usually more common than Western saddles. Many children who learn to ride Western start out with a regular size saddle, skipping the introductory size entirely.

There are also a number of products that help children adapt to larger saddles for safe and enjoyable riding.

The youth show saddle from Circle Y has all of the features of an adult saddle but is made to fit smaller riders and is built lightweight for ease of use and handling. Fitting saddles for children and smaller horses requires more than just shrinking an adult version. (800)531-3600

[5] Helmets—No matter their outlook on every other children's product you have in your shop, parents will purchase helmets. Increasingly, organizers of horse events for children require helmets, and many parents are making the choice to use them even when they're not required.

Eventually, a generation of riders will emerge who regard helmets as a natural choice, like boots or jeans. Helmets for children are available in a variety of styles and colors.

Just as with adult helmets, children's headgear should be ASTM/SEI certified. Fit is also an important factor for children's helmets. A poorly fitted helmet provides reduced protection for riders.

The traditionally styled Charles Owen young rider's hat is covered with a short pile velvet and comes in its own carrying case, which features the 3D images of cute and cuddly ponies. Helmets in a variety of price ranges are available for children. www.charlesown.com

[6] Toys, Games and Books—The variety of items available in this category is unending. Retailers can choose from horse stickers, visors, horse pencils, stick horses or horse-themed notepaper.

Toy horses are common in most retail operations hoping to attract children, everything from the Breyer collectible variety to the small, hand-friendly plastic horses.

Coloring books and board games, such as the Gallop Home board game, are popular with children and provide hours of fun and challenge.

Despite the recent emphasis on the danger of guns and all the politically correct considerations that go along with it, many retailers report that toy guns offered in Western styles remain popular selections. Several companies manufacturer replica sheriff's badges, vests and holsters to complete the ensemble.

Horse stickers, such as these offered by AWST International, are good choices for any children's section. www.awstintl.com