

Children like to copy grown ups and driving is one of their favorite things to imitate. Ride on toys are a means of playing in a fantasy world and the many different vehicles allow kids to role play. They also give them a feeling of independence. Some of these toys get up to surprising speeds and good makes are designed to be durable.

The method of propulsion is either pedal power or electric cars. Pedal cars use push pedals or rotary pedals with a chain, similar to bicycles. The rotary method enables the car to go faster than push pedals. Electric cars usually come in 6, 12 or 24 volt versions. 6V is suitable for the under-5s and can go on hard flat surfaces, powering the ride on toys at walking pace. 12v can also travel over grass or gravel and will go around 5mph or jogging speed. 24v cars are more suited to older children and can go up to 15mph.

There is a vehicle to suit every personality, including stylish sports cars, based on models such as Ferrari, Mercedes, Alfa Romeo and BMW. Character cars are also race cars, including Lightning McQueen. Other models include Formula 1 cars from the Grand Prix circuit. There is also a choice of go karts and quad bikes. Motorbikes come in well known makes like Ducatti and there is also a Vespa scooter.

These aren't just toys for the boys and they are popular with girls, who have their own pink cars, scooters and bikes from Barbie and Princess. The selection of jeeps also includes pink models.

Nostalgia can often persuade parents to buy classic ride on toys and models like the Model T Roadster are very stylish. There is also a range of retro racing cars and hot rods. Kids can imagine they are taking to the skies in a Corsair pedal plane or pretend they're barnstorming in the Red Baron pedal plane. Fire engines can be retro too. All these vehicles can be topped off with accessories, such as play helmets or electronic steering wheels. Winter fun is guaranteed with ski bobs and snowmobils.

The world of work can be great fun for creative play. It's easy to be a construction worker with a Caterpillar Dump Truck or a digger. Tractors come with front loaders or trailers and can pull haywagons or water tankers. Kids can load up the trailer with a pile of plastic logs and they become an instant lumberjack with their ride on toys.