

George III child's rattle



Shake, Rattle, and Roll

This multipurpose child's toy—a "coral-and-bells"—includes a whistle, rattle, and coral teething surface. Silversmiths often incorporated coral into rattles as it was believed to promote health and good fortune. At a time when infant mortality was high, these objects served both as amusements and amulets.



George III child's rattle, London, 1808

Take a closer look

This rattle offers a feast for our eyes and a child's developing senses. Smooth coral contributes color while soothing teething gums. A whistle and jingling bells entertain. Engraved decorations add texture. The play of light across the reflective silver surface delights even the youngest observers.

Something to talk about

Rattles are among the oldest recorded toys still in use today. Early versions were made of materials less durable than silver, such as clay or dried fruits containing seeds. What types of toys engage and distract infants today?

Who knew?

More than 300 women silversmiths worked in England between the late-17th and mid-19th centuries. These expert artisans acted as teachers, instructing apprentices in their craft. Records indicate that **Mary Ann Croswell (ca. 1775-?)** taught the trade to her son Henry in 1819.

Mary Ann Croswell (attributed), *George III child's rattle*, London, 1808; Silver with coral; 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches long; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Silver collection assembled by Nancy Valentine, purchased with funds donated by Mr. and Mrs. Oliver R. Grace and family; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth

