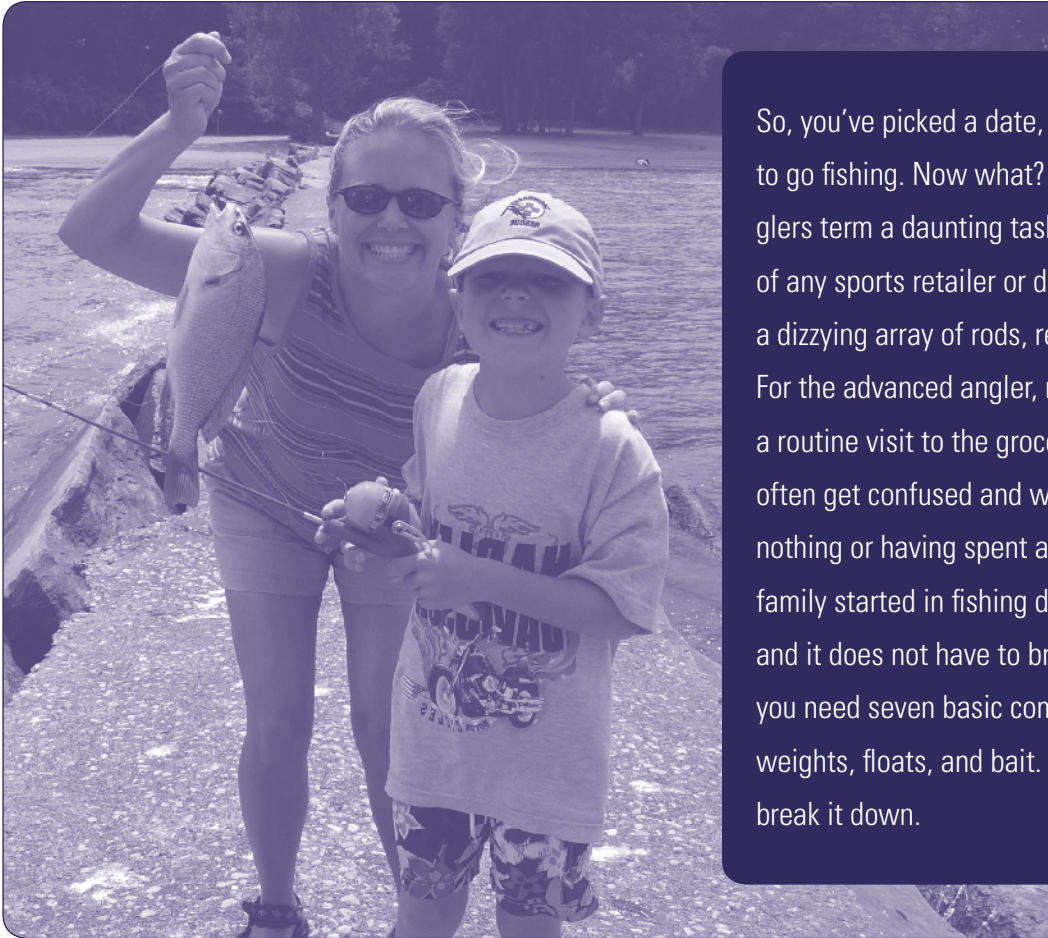


Basic Fishing Equipment for Kids



So, you've picked a date, time, and place for the family to go fishing. Now what? You face what beginning anglers term a daunting task. Walk into the fishing section of any sports retailer or department store and there is a dizzying array of rods, reels, lures, and tackle boxes. For the advanced angler, navigating the selection is like a routine visit to the grocery store. Beginning anglers often get confused and walk out of the store either with nothing or having spent a small fortune. Getting your family started in fishing does not have to be confusing and it does not have to break the bank. To get started, you need seven basic components: rod, reel, line, hooks, weights, floats, and bait. Still sound complicated? Let's break it down.

Rod and Reel

Most sporting goods and outdoor retail stores sell rod and reel combinations. It is always wise to ask a store clerk to help you find the right combo. Rod/reel combinations are sensible and economical. They pair the right sized rod with the correct reel and generally are less expensive than buying components separately. Many full-service outdoors retailers will also instruct you in using your new equipment, a service few discount stores offer.

Easy, push-button casting is a good reason to start kids with a spincast reel. For young kids (ages 5+), these outfits often come in fun

packages endorsed by a favorite action figure: Barbie, Snoopy, Spider Man, etc. These action figure packages include the rod, push-button reel, fishing line, and a casting plug (to help teach children how to cast). All of this will run less than \$15.00. Cheap reels are prone to breakage, however, so a few extra dollars will purchase a better reel that can be used year after year.

Have your kids outgrown Barbie and Spider Man? Ask a store clerk to help you find a better quality rod and a spincast or open-faced spinning reel combo. These combos will include only the rod and reel and should cost less than \$30.00. It is recommended that the rod length not exceed six feet for kids.



Ohio Sea Grant
www.ohioseagrant.osu.edu

Ohio Division of Wildlife
www.dnr.state.oh.us/wildlife

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation
www.rbff.org

Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council
www.great-lakes.org

The Heart of Lake Erie
www.heartoflakeerie.com

For more information contact Kelly Riesen
Fisheries Extension Program
Coordinator
www.ohioseagrant.osu.edu/kriesen
Ohio Sea Grant
Lake Erie Nature and Science
Center
28728 Wolf Rd.
Bay Village, Ohio 44140
440.808.5627
kriesen.4@osu.edu

Fishing Line

After you have bought your rod and reel, you will need fishing line. Most spinning reels do not come with the fishing line and those that do will typically have low quality fishing line. If you aren't sure how to spool it onto the reel, ask the sporting goods associate for help. Line is your outfit's most important component—it connects you with that prized fish. It's worth an extra dollar or two for a good brand name.

Monofilament is clear, inexpensive, and it's the standard type of line used for fishing. Line strength is measured in "pound test," or how many pounds of pressure it would take to break the line. Most lines will take more pressure than the pound test that is listed. For young anglers, line of 10- or 12-pound test will tangle less than lighter line.

Sinkers and Floats

Sinkers are used to pull your bait down to where the fish are. A commonly used and simple weight is called a split shot. This is a small piece of lead that looks like a BB. It has a slit in one side so it looks like a clam mouth. The line goes into the opening and then the "clam mouth" is pinched shut. Do not pinch the lead split shot with your teeth for obvious reasons! A good size for pond fishing is #3/0. Larger sizes may be needed for areas with current, like rivers, or areas with depth, like lakes.

Floats, also called bobbers, are often (but not always) used. Floats are used for two reasons: to keep your bait off the bottom and/or to indicate a strike. Bobbers are especially helpful for children because they are able to see when a fish bites at their bait. If you opt not to use a bobber, you will either have to leave your bait sitting on the bottom or continually reel and cast.

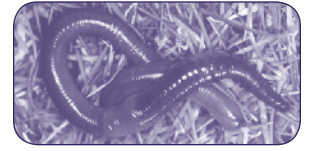
Hooks

A hook is a hook, right? Hooks are the business end of your equipment and are actually quite an important variable. There are over 500 different types of hooks on the market. Hooks come in sizes from the very largest, 19/0 saltwater hooks, to the smallest size 32 trout hooks. Children are interested not necessarily in quality (size) of fish, but of quantity (number) of fish caught. To catch more fish, go with a smaller hook size, for example, size 8.

It is always wise for an adult to do all of the hook-handling when very young children are fishing. If safety is a concern, hooks without barbs can be bought. Hook barbs can also be filed down at home. Long-shanked hooks are harder for small fish to swallow and make unhooking easier.

Bait

As with everything else in the fishing world, there seems to be a million choices. Live bait, dead bait, scented bait, artificial lures....the list goes on. Again, kids are most concerned with the quantity of fish they catch. Artificial lures are often only as good as the action that you can impart to them through the rod. Fake baits are often more expensive than live bait and have varying success rates. The good old standby, worms, is one of the best ways to ensure at least a bite from a fish. It can even be a fun project to have the kids go out in the backyard to dig for worms!



Fishing is a great recreational activity that can bring friends and families together in the great outdoors. Gearing up for fishing does not have to be a daunting task, even if it's your first time. Use this make-shift shopping list to help you navigate the shopping aisles of the fishing world. May you and your friends and family spend many happy days on the water!



If you have more questions about fish, fishing equipment or fishing programs through Ohio Sea Grant, please contact Kelly Riesen, Fisheries Extension Program Coordinator, 440.808.5627 or kriesen.4@osu.edu.

