

# Dr. Toy's Holiday Gift Guide



Let's  
**PLAY**

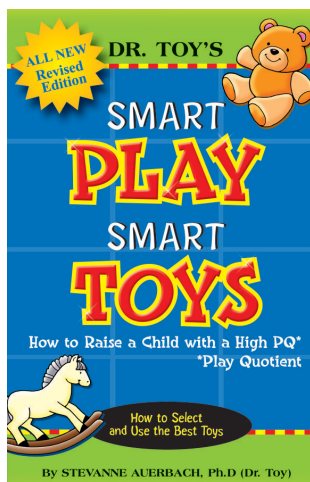
# Dr. Toy's 100 Best Children's Products for 2004

Toys, books, software, games, puzzles, audio and video, and much more...

## Dr. Toy makes product selections based on the following criteria:

- safety
- innovation
- design and durability
- age appropriateness
- long lasting play value
- cultural and ethnic diversity
- good transition from home to school
- educational value and learning skills
- creativity
- improves understanding of the community and the world (socially responsible)
- good value for price, and,
- just plain fun!

**PLAY**



Smart Toys +  
Smart Play =  
Smart Kids!



## Dr. Toy's Tips For Keeping Toys Safe & Clean

- Watch for small parts, sharp edges, loose ties, or other possible dangers for small children under the age of 3.
  - Be sure products are labeled non-toxic.
  - Cover exposed electric sockets.
  - Toys handled frequently by infants and toddlers should be cleaned and disinfected or when soiled, to prevent the spread of germs.
  - Follow these steps for washable, colorfast toys:
    1. Wash toys with soapy water, then rinse thoroughly
    2. Clean toys with a solution of 3/4 cup household bleach in 1 gallon of water. Let stand for 5 minutes.
    3. Rinse completely and dry.
- For more tips on disinfecting with household bleach, contact: [www.Clorox.Com](http://www.Clorox.Com)



## About Dr. Toy

Dr. Toy, Stevanne Auerbach, Ph.D. Director of the Institute for Childhood Resources, San Francisco, produces an annual holiday guide, "100 Best Children's Products," is an expert in child development, author of Dr. Toy's Smart Play/Smart Toys and Toys for a Lifetime, a frequent writer of articles, consultant, and speaker about toys, children's products, play and parenting issues.

**Dr. Toy's Guide** ([www.drtoy.com](http://www.drtoy.com)) was the first site to provide toy information on the internet.



## Dr. Toy's Tips on Selecting Toys and Other Children's Products

Before shopping observe child at play. Gather a list of possible products from Dr. Toy's Holiday Guide: "100 Best Children's Products" and from Dr. Toy's Guide: web site (drtoy.com). Ask for suggestions from sitter, grandparents, teacher and other parents. Notice store and product ads. Check your child's "Wish List" and current needs. **As you examine a potential purchase, ask yourself...**

- 1. Is the toy safe?** Any potential hazards? Is the product too small? Any sharp edges or loose ties? Is it nontoxic? Durable? Will it take rough treatment? Does it meet Consumer Product Safety Standards? Is there a guarantee on the product? What is the return policy?
- 2. Is the product fun?** A toy or children's product is supposed to entertain the child. It should amuse, delight, excite, and be enjoyable.
- 3. Is the product appropriate?** Is this toy or product significant now? Does it fit the child's age, skills, and abilities? Will it hold interest? Will child use the product happily?
- 4. Is the product well designed?** Is it easy to use? Does it look good? Feel good? Is the product versatile? Is there more than one use for the product?
- 5. Is the product durable?** Will it be something that will last a long time? Children play hard and subject their toys to a lot of abuse and wear.
- 6. Is the product appealing to the child?** Does it offer an opportunity for fun, to learn, and to think? Does it help him/her learn about living environment? Is the toy or product inviting?
- 7. Will the product help the child expand creativity?** With the right products the child can expand his or her imagination in art, crafts, drama, hobbies, language, reading, music and physical movement.
- 8. Will the toy frustrate or challenge the child?** Does the toy offer something new to learn, to practice, or try? Will the child know how to use the product? Or, will it be too difficult to use without adult assistance?
- 9. Does the product match the package and the package match the product?** If the toy does not match ads or packaging it can be disappointing. Is age-grading clear?
- 10. Will the toy help nurture childhood?** Does the product help the child express emotions, experience concern for others, practice positive social interaction? Does it provide value to his or her childhood? Or, are there any violent, sexist, or other negative aspects to the product?
- 11. What will the toy teach?** Does it help expand positive self-esteem, values, understanding, and cultural awareness? Does it offer practice in skill building? Eye/hand coordination? Fine and large motor skills? Communication? Does it educate the child about the environment? Community? World? History? Computers? Other skills?
- 12. Can the product be cleaned and reused?** If it is not washable, can it be cleaned in some practical way?
- 13. Can I afford this toy?** Does the price match the value?

### Say "Toy" around the world!

Afrikaans : Speelgoed  
 Albanian : Lodra grazie  
 Arabic : Lu'ba  
 Armenian : Jaghalik  
 Assyrian : Thal Yadei  
 Bangla : Khelna  
 Bosnian : Igrachka  
 Croatian : Igrachka  
 Czech : Hracka  
 Cantonese : Wan Gee  
 Mandarin : Wan Ju  
 Danish : Legetoej  
 Dutch : Speelgoed  
 Egyptian : Lu'ba  
 English : TOY  
 Estonian : Mänguasi  
 Farsi : Samanie Bazi Atfal  
 Finnish : Leluja  
 Flemish : Speeltje  
 French : Jouet  
 German : Spielzeug  
 Greek : Pehnithi  
 Haitian Creole : Jwet  
 Hawaiian : Mea pa'ani  
 Hebrew : Tza'a'tzu'a  
 Hindi : Khilona  
 Hungarian : Játék  
 Icelandic : Leikfang  
 Indonesian : Mainan  
 Iranian/Farsi : Asbabe Bazie  
 Irish : Bréagán  
 Italian : Giocattoli  
 Japanese : Omocha  
 Korean : Jang Nan Gam  
 Macedonian : Igracka  
 Malay : Barang permainan  
 kanakMalayalam : Kalippattam  
 Maltese : Gugarell  
 Marathi : Khelane  
 Nederlands : Speelgoed  
 Norwegian : Leke  
 Ovambo : Okai Ma Kokudana  
 Papiamentu : Kos Di Hunga  
 Polish : Zabawka  
 Portuguese : Brinquedo  
 Romanian : Jucarie  
 Russian : Igrushka  
 Slovenian : Igracha  
 Spanish : Juguete  
 Surinam : Pre sani  
 Swedish : Leksak  
 Tagalog : Laruan  
 Tamil : Bommai  
 Telugu : Bomma  
 Thai : Khong-len'  
 Turkish : Oyuncak  
 Ukrainian : Igrashka  
 Vietnamese : Do choi



## Dr. Toy's Suggested Smart Toys to Assist Your Child in Learning & Fun

### 1. ALEX - Color Scroller Ages 3-12 \$9.99 800-666-2539 [www.alextoys.com](http://www.alextoys.com)

This wonderful coloring scroller set allows for endless creativity. Color and keep 50 pictures held in a neat, durable case. As pictures are completed, simply turn the knob at the bottom to advance to the next image. This product is a fantastic addition to your child's everyday playthings and perfect to take for travel. It includes six crayons and two fun scrolls. Refills with 50 pictures sold separately.



### 2. b.dazzle - Flowers Scramble Squares® Puzzle Ages 4-12 \$7.95 800-809-4242 [www.b-dazzle.com](http://www.b-dazzle.com)

These little brain teaser puzzles are easy to play, but hard to solve. Identify & learn about beautiful Native American flowers. Each puzzle has nine 4"x 4" pieces with excellent artwork to keep everyone entertained. Easy to carry, perfect for travel, the 91 varied puzzles in this series include facts, trivia questions and hidden answers. Donations made to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.



### 3. Comfy - Easy PC Ages 1-5 \$79.99 800-837-6527 [www.comfyland.com](http://www.comfyland.com)

Effective play-and-learn keyboard to enable children to learn and play with the PC. Provides excellent platform for education and entertainment. Easy to use, the keyboard has large colorful buttons, friendly animated characters and inspires effective learning. Special software offers challenge that grows with child. Connects to any PC with easy plug-in play connections. Your computer whiz will enjoy all of these products.



### 4. Educational Insights-GeoSafari Phonics Pad 3-12 \$149.00 800-995-4436 [www.educationalinsights.com](http://www.educationalinsights.com)

Introduces letters, sounds and words through rhymes and songs. Covers everything your child needs to start school ready to read. Push pictures on touch-sensitive cards with phonics instruction program. LED lights motivate and guide game play. Audio teaches children proper pronunciation of letters and sounds. Program consists of 128 lessons, 100 hours of direct, interactive phonics instruction. Standard headphone available.



### 5. Fisher-Price-PowerTouch Baby 6 months-36 months \$29.99 800-432-5437 [www.fisher-price.com](http://www.fisher-price.com)

Discover the joy of stories from the first touch. Combines finger-touch technology, automatic page recognition; durable, wipeable pages, tactile elements plus raised letters and numbers. Textured objects provide basics of literacy development. Features include fifty "easy-touch" points, and selection of different musical instruments and 150 songs. "Baby Animals" book is included. Additional titles sold separately.



### 6. Learning Resources-Light 'N Strike Math 6-12 \$29.95 866-457-8697 [www.learningresources.com](http://www.learningresources.com)

Arcade-style electronic math game, with three levels of difficulty. Fast-paced games are engaging to reinforce basic math skills: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Choose level of difficulty, read the math equation, "strike it" to respond with answer when numbers flash and beep. Product creates positive feeling toward math. Features soft-lighted keys and soft foam mallet.



### 7. Learning Resources-M. Gears Racers 7-12 \$29.95 866-457-8697 [www.learningresources.com](http://www.learningresources.com)

Exciting vehicles great to spark imagination and develop motor skills. Create the ultimate racing cars using color-coded instructions. Build different remote control racers or combine with other sets. Construction toy includes everything needed for speedway including driver, pylon cones and flag with stickers, infrared motor base. Each racer and remote requires 4 AA batteries, not included.



### 8. MEGA BLOKS - Nano Turbo Rally Racer Ages 6-12 -\$5.99 800-465-634 [www.megabloks.com](http://www.megabloks.com)

Construct a little racer for hours of creative play. Many details, fun and plenty of performance built in. Unique miniature construction system to build, play and collect. Features action launcher to create cool stunts or races. Choose from six different versions of racers, that are easy to build, and customize with a range in size and action. Fun to collect, trade with six inch multi-use play case to store and display vehicles.



### 9. MGA Entertainment - 4Ever Best Friends Ages 4-7 \$19.99 800-222-4685 [www.mgae.com](http://www.mgae.com)

Unique little dolls engage child in hours of open-ended role-play fun. These dolls provide excellent role models for positive playtime. Learn about friendship, individuality, creativity and fashion. Features articulated wrists that allow dolls to hold hands. Each set includes two dolls, collectible charms your child can wear plus mix-and-match accessories with many other fine details.



### 10. Small World Toys - Wild Gertie Ball Ages 1-6 \$6.99 866-310-1717 [www.smallworldtoys.com](http://www.smallworldtoys.com)

Three different colorful balls will delight anyone who enjoys hugging, kicking and catching. Designs are three wild animal styles--zebra, giraffe and tiger. Sized for easy grasp, these 9 inch diameter, lightweight balls, are perfect for indoor and outdoor play. Features include a plug and a removable straw for deflation, easy storage and perfect for travel.



# DR. TOY'S 100 BEST CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS FOR 2004

Selected by Stevanne Auerbach, Ph.D. (Dr. Toy)

#	Company	Product Type	Top 10	Age	Price	Phone	Website
1	4R	Mythmatical Battles CG ES	5	9-12	\$15.99	734-854-1969	mythmaticalbattles.com
2	Action Products	I Dig Treasures ES TY		6-12	\$24.99	800-772-2846	apii.com
3	AirPacks	AirMajor EQ OP TR	4	5-11	\$54.99	800-310-7383	airpacks.com
4	ALEX	Color Scroller AC CP NO TR	7	3-12	\$9.99	800-666-2539	alextoys.com
5	Avid Ideas	Toucanz Obstacle VT DV	6	5-10	\$17.95	877-543-7386	toucanz.com
6	b. dazzle	American Native Flowers ES PZ	4	4-12	\$7.95	800-809-4242	b-dazzle.com
7	Baby Einstein	Baby Galilee Sky AE BO CP FP		9m-3	\$15.99	800-793-1454	babyeinstein.com
8	Babyscapes	Zooper Phonics ES VT	3	2-5	\$14.95	888-441-5437	babyscapes.com
9	Battat/Parent's Mag	Busy Street AE ES	1	1-2	\$49.99	800-361-7899	battatco.com
10	Be Good Company	My Little Sandbox CP FP OP	1	3-8	\$24.99	650-740-7024	begoodcompany.com
11	Be Smart Kids	Be Smart Kids ES SW	3	1-5	\$99.99	888-267-5080	besmartkids.com
12	big BOING Toys	Gnomads CP ES FP NO	4	8-12	\$7.99	510-653-0349	bigboing.com
13	Binney & Smith	Gadget Headz Car Factory TY	1	8-12	\$24.99	800-272-9652	crayola.com
14	Blue Orange	Maask BG ES	5	6-12	\$19.95	415-252-0372	blueorangegames.com
15	BOX-Carz	BOX-Carz AE CS ES FP	7	3-6	\$5.99	603-746-2291	boxcarz.com
16	Brand New World	Dramatic Dress Ups CS FP	8	3-6	\$23.95	866-721-6645	brandnewworld.com
17	Briarpatch	I Spy Word Scramble ES GE TR		7-12	\$19.99	800-232-7427	briarpatch.com
18	Center Enterprises	Washable Paint/Ink Pads AC HO		3-12	\$17.49	800-542-2214	centerenterprises.com
19	Comfy	EasyPC CM EG ES SR	3	1-5	\$79.99	800-837-6527	comfyland.com
20	CoolBlox	COOLBLOX mini CO TR	8	3-9	\$19.99	905-761-5241	coolblox.com
21	CTC Publishing	Hey Dad--Let's Talk BG SR	5	3-10	\$29.95	800-942-0962	couragetochange.com
22	Dad's Ink	Toads of Fun BG ES	5	4-8	\$14.95	847-470-3212	toadsoffun.com
23	DaMert	Astro-Logix Neon Med. CO CP	1	5-12	\$10.00	800-356-0474	damert.com
24	Discovery Toys	Roll & Play AE CG PL PU	2	18-5	\$16.99	800-341-8697	discoverytoysinc.com
25	DoubleStar	Cogno: Deep Worlds BG ES	5	7-12	\$29.95	866-442-6466	cogno.com
26	EDC Publishing	Animal Sticker Atlas AE BO CP	4	6-8	\$8.95	800-475-4522	edcpub.com
27	Educational Insights	GeoSafari Phonics Pad EG ES	2	3-12	\$149.00	800-995-4436	educationalinsights.com
28	Edupress	Math Flash Card ES TR	2	6-10	\$11.99	800-835-7978	edupressinc.com
29	ETA Cuisenaire	Versatiles® Kindergarten ES TY	2	5-6	\$64.95	800-445-5985	etacuisenaire.com
30	Family Pastimes	Ice Breakers to the Rescue BG	4	10-12	\$27.00	888-267-4414	familypastimes.com
31	Fisher-Price	PowerTouch Baby BO ES TR TY	3	6m-3	\$29.99	800-432-5437	fisher-price.com
32	Folkmanis	Pinocchio Puppet CP DO FP PU		5-12	\$44.00	800-654-8922	folkmanis.com
33	Front Porch Classics	Stretch Run BG	5	8-12	\$59.95	206-826-3206	frontporchclassics.com
34	Fundex Games	A to Z Junior BG	5	6-12	\$19.99	800-486-9787	fundexgames.com
35	Funrise Toys	Tub Town Coral Castle AE TY		2-5	\$14.99	800-882-3808	funrise.com
36	Gamewright	In A Pickle CG	5	10-12	\$15.99	800-638-7568	gamewright.com
37	Goldberger Doll	15" Zip-ity Do Dolly DO	8	1-8	\$9.99	800-452-3655	goldbergerdoll.com
38	Greg & Steve	Ready Set Move CD	6	3-9	\$13.98	800-548-4063	gregandsteve.com
39	HABA	Fantasy Blocks CO CP ES TY		1-5	\$35.00	800-468-6873	habausa.com
40	Hands On Toys	Crunch Art AC CP TR	1	5-10	\$8.50	888-442-6376	handsontoy.com
41	Hasbro	Lite-Brite Illuminart Easel AC CP		4-8	\$34.99	800-327-8264	hasbro.com
42	Hasbro Games	Guess Where? BG	5	6-12	\$14.99	888-836-7025	hasbro.com
43	Hexabits	Fun Bucket AC CO CP ES PZ		6-12	\$19.98	734-389-2500	hexabits.com
44	Innovative Inter.	Talk Blocks ES SR	4	3-9	\$33.95	888-590-2303	talkblocks.com
45	Innovative Kids	Spin Read & Play AE BG ES SR	4	6-12	\$14.99	800-838-6400	innovativekids.com
46	Int'l Playthings	Flash Beat Drum ML TY	7	1-3	\$19.99	800-445-8347	intplay.com
47	Jonic	Geomag Color 96 CO CP ES		6-12	\$49.99	888-995-6642	geomagna.com
48	Joy Stories	Under the Lily Pad CD ES PU SR	6	5-9	\$20.00	866-339-5300	joystories.com
49	Juno Baby	Juno's Wonderful Day ES ML VT	6	0-4	\$19.99	415-460-6415	junobaby.com
50	Kidzup	Letters & Numbers CD	6	3-5	\$6.99	888-321-5437	kidzup.com

### Key to Product Type:

AC = Arts and Crafts	CD = CD	DH = Doll House	FP = Fantasy Play	OP = Outdoor Play	SR = Social Responsible
AE = Active	CG = Card Game	DO = Doll	GE = Game	OT = Other	SW = Software
AT = Audiotape	CM = CD-Rom	DV = DVD	HO = Hobby	PL = Plush	TR = Travel
BG = Board Game	CO = Construction	EG = Electronic Game	ML = Musical	PU = Puppet	TY = Toy
BO = Book	CP = Creative	ES = Educational	NO = Novelty	PZ = Puzzle	VT = Video Tape

## DR. TOY'S 100 BEST CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS FOR 2004

Selected by Stevanne Auerbach, Ph.D. (Dr. Toy)

#	Company	Product Type	Top 10	Age	Price	Phone	Website
51	KikaFlik	KikaFlik AE ES OP TR TY	8	3-7	\$29.95	888-229-9045	kikaflik.com
52	Kimbo	Laugh 'n Learn Silly Songs CD ML		3-6	\$14.95	800-848-6099	kimboed.com
63	Klutz	Twirled Paper AC BO CP	7	10-12	\$16.95	800-737-4123	klutz.com
54	Leaf Moon Arts	Storycard Theater BO ES	7	3-8	\$24.95	408-865-0447	storycardtheater.com
55	LeapFrog	Turbo Extreme CP	3	6-10	\$34.99	800-701-5327	leapfrog.com
56	Learning Journey	USA Find It! ES PZ SR		5-12	\$9.99	877-839-3969	thelearningjourney.com
57	Learning Resources	Remote Control Racers AE CO CP	8	7-12	\$29.95	866-457-8697	learningresources.com
58	Learning Resources	Light 'N' Strike Math AE EG ES ML	2	6-12	\$29.95	866-457-8697	learningresources.com
59	LEGO Systems	Prehistoric Creatures AE CO CP TY	7	7-12	\$29.99	800-453-4652	lego.com
60	Lots to Learn	Nature Volume I (DVD) CD VT DV	4	2-5	\$19.99	516-799-4376	lotstolearn.com
61	Lucy Hammett	Reptile Bingo BG ES	2	3-12	\$13.95	888-420-7585	lucybingogames.com
62	Made By Hands	Make-Your-Own Games AC BG CP	7	6-12	\$19.35	800-839-7369	made-by-hands.com
63	Marban Industries	Sentence Says BG CG ES TY		8-12	\$29.95	818-886-4650	sentencesays.com
64	Mega Bloks	Turbo Rally Racer CO CP HO	1	6-12	\$5.99	800-465-6342	megabloks.com
65	MGA	4Ever Best Friends DH DO	1	4-5	\$19.99	800-222-4685	mgae.com
66	Mic-O-Mic	Racing Car CO CP HO TS	1	9-12	\$40.50	877-642-6642	micamericas.com
67	Microsoft Game	Zoo Tycoon 2 CM EG	3	2-12	\$39.99	800-537-8324	microsoft.com
68	Mudpuppy Press	Turn & Learn CG ES PZ		4-7	\$13.00	800-670-7441	galison.com
69	My First Day	First Day at Preschool ES VT	6	2-5	\$13.99	323-466-1905	myfirstday.net
70	NAMITS	NAMITS Game of Think CG CP ES	2	4-12	\$9.95	207-797-5502	namits.com
71	New Hope	In Motion & Play CD CP ES ML	4	2-8	\$14.98	516-466-6040	bobbysusser.com
72	Noodle Head	Chinese Kite Kit AC AE CP OP	8	8-12	\$14.99	866-892-7311	noodleheadfun.com
73	Ohio Art	ETO - CP EG TR	3	4-11	\$34.99	800-641-6226	world-of-toys.com
74	Oregon Scientific	Barbie Dictionary BO EG ES		3-7	\$34.99	800-853-8883	oregonscientific.com
75	Patch Products	Self-Esteem Game BG SR	4	8-12	\$14.99	800-524-4263	patchproducts.com
76	Peopling.net	TekToy AE CP SC	2	6-12	\$95.00	716-662-7794	peopling.net
77	Plasticant-Mobilo	Building & Construction AE CO CP	1	3-8	\$27.60	800-323-3040	mobilo.net
78	Playhut	Magic Play Ground AE CP FP	7	3-7	\$49.99	888-752-9488	playhut.com
79	Playmobil	Zoo CO CP FP		4-12	\$99.99	800-752-9662	playmobil.com
80	Publications Intl	Story Reader BO EG ES ML	3	3-8	\$24.99	800-745-9299	pilbooks.com
81	RC2 Corp	Baby Birdhouse ES TR	1	0-3	\$19.99	800-704-8697	rc2corp.com
82	RiverEdge Game	Wordigo BG ES	5	8-12	\$24.99	479-444-0360	wordigo.com
83	Rock 'N Learn	Alphabet Circus ES ML VT DV	6	2-5	\$19.99	800-348-8445	rocknlearn.com
84	Schoenhut Piano	Durable Toy Piano ES HO ML TY		3-8	\$338.95	888-414-2739	toypiano.com
85	Simtec	FunSlides Carpet Skates AE TS TY	8	6-12	\$17.99	800-847-4683	funslides.com
86	Small World Toys	Wild Gertie Ball AE OP TY	8	1-6	\$6.99	866-310-1717	smallworldtoys.com
87	Soaring Star	Pocket Snails Letter Adv. ES VT DV	2	2-5	\$15.95	see website	pocketsnails.com
88	Spin Master	Bella Dancerella AE ES FP	8	3-8	\$29.99	800-622-8339	spinmaster.com
89	Start Smarter	Today's Mighty Trains AE ES SR VT6		2-8	\$12.99	404-944-1351	startsmarter.com
90	Tangle Toys	Tangle Therapy TY	8	5-12	\$10.00	888-829-3808	tangletoys.com
91	Thames & Kosmos	Brainy Freeze AE ES SC SR	2	8-12	\$14.95	800-587-2872	thamesandkosmos.com
92	Toys R Us	Power Tools Workshop TY	7	3-5	\$49.99	800-869-7787	toysrus.com
93	Twin Sisters	SPEECHercise CD ES	6	3-6	\$12.99	800-248-8946	twinsisters.com
94	VTech	Write & Learn Smartboard EG ES	3	3-5	\$29.99	800-521-2010	vtechkids.com
95	Way Way Ent.	This Little Piggy Stayed Home ES	6	1-4	\$14.95	888-675-0695	waywayentertainment.com
96	Wild Heart Ranch	I Sea Horses! BO ES PL TY		6-12	\$9.99	888-889-9213	iseahorses.com
97	Wow Wee	Robosapien TY	3	6-12	\$99.00	914-738-9477	wowwee.com
98	Zak Records	When Bullfrogs Croak CD ES ML	7	5-10	\$15.00	877-358-5820	zakmorgan.com
99	Zapf Creation	Love me CHOU CHOU DO ES FP		3-12	\$49.99	407-351-7702	zapf-creation.com
100	Zen Baby	Zen Baby DVD VT DV		1-24m	\$16.95	877-449-2229	zen-baby.com

### Key to Top Ten Best:

**1 = Toys**

**2 = Educational Products**

**3 = Software/CD-Rom/High-Tech Products**

**4 = Socially Responsible Products**

**5 = Games**

**6 = Audio/Video Tape/CDs**

**7 = Creative Products**

**8 = Active Products**



## Dr. Toy's Ten Tips on Use of Smart Play/Smart Toys for Learning and Fun

Dr. Toy suggests that parents, grandparents, and teachers select a variety of toys and products to help children gain a lifelong love of learning and fun: Consider these tips to increase "Smart Play."

1. Create time daily for a good balance of varied play experiences of physical activity, creativity and educational opportunities.
2. Take stock of current toys; take an inventory of what your child is playing with, what is not being used and what is needed next in the "Smart Play" process.
3. Expand your child's creativity with plenty of fun time to include artwork, making puppets, creating a puppet show, reading, and writing stories.
4. Use all opportunities possible for play and learning--backyard experiences, grocery shopping, visiting community helpers, playing in the park, and traveling.
5. Vary play experiences, such as construction products, puzzles, dolls, and skill-building products, to help your child gain self-confidence, increase learning ability, and explore his or her imagination.
6. Choose play experiences for your child that require concentration and thinking and also involve many important skills that enhance and balance cognitive learning.
7. Gather many creative materials and keep them handy so your child can experience and expand creativity spontaneously. Whether your child is drawing, painting, finger painting, working with Playdoh or clay, or making a collage, he or she benefits from self-expression
8. Create a "Play Notebook" to keep information about useful products, the child's responses, and tips on expanding creativity, learning, and physical development.
9. Consider how different skills are strengthened with play products. Think about using products and play activities to expand skills and learning experiences for your child.
10. Children learn best through play. Smart toys encourage children to maximize their potential. Take time out each day for play with games, art, music, construction, books, dolls, hi-tech toys and other fun products.

For more information, go to the websites of Dr. Toy and ALEX • B Dazzle • Comfy • Educational Insights • Fisher Price • Learning Resources • Mega Bloks • MGA Entertainment • Small World



### Selected "Smart Toys" for Skill-Building:

- **Active Play** - Wild Gertie® Ball - Small World Toys (Ages 1-6 \$5.99) 866-310-1717 smallworld-toys.com
- **Construction Play** - M. Gears™ Remote Control Racers- Learning Resources (Ages 7-12 \$29.95) 866-457-8697 learningresources.com
- **Creativity/Art** - Color Scroller - ALEX (3-7 yrs. \$9.99) 800-666-2539 alextoys.com
- **Dramatic Play/Language** - 4Ever Best Friends - MGA Entertainment (Ages 4-7 \$19.99) 800-222-4685 mgae.com
- **Fantasy Play/Dexterity** - Nano Turbo Rally Racer - Mega Bloks (Ages 6-12 \$5.99) 800-465-634 megabloks.com
- **Learning/Reading Readiness** - Easy PC - Comfy (1-5 yrs. \$79.00) 800-837-6527 comfyland.com
- **Math Readiness/Logic Development** - Light 'N Strike Math Game - Learning Resources (6-12 \$29.95) 866-457-8697 learningresources.com
- **Mental Development** - Power Touch Baby - Fisher Price (6-36 mos. \$29.99) 800-432-5437 fisher-price.com
- **Puzzle/Logical Thinking** - American Native Flowers Scramble Squares® Puzzle - b. dazzle (Ages 4-12 \$7.95) 800-809-4242 b-dazzle.com
- **Reading Readiness** - Geosafari Phonics Pad - Educational Insights (3-7 yrs. \$149.00) 800-995-4436 educationalinsights.com



# SMART TOYS FOR SMART PLAY

*Dr. Toy's "100 Best Children's Products for 2004"  
Report on Internet's World Wide Web  
Best Smart Products for Holiday Gifts*

*Toys, Videos, Audio CDs and Tapes, Games, Books, Software/CDROM's and many new,  
unique, quality, developmentally appropriate items are featured.*



The 13th Annual report of "Dr. Toy's 100 Best Children's Products 2004" is available in the magazine, Dr. Toy's Guide (<http://drtoy.com>). Developed by noted child development authority, Stevanne Auerbach, Ph.D. (a.k.a. Dr. Toy) this free service helps consumers who desire to purchase safe, affordable, educationally oriented, stimulating toys and products for children. "As a childhood specialist for over 30 years," says Dr. Toy, Director of the Institute for Childhood Resources, founded in San Francisco in 1975, "I have seen the continuous, essential need for more year-round resources for consumers to identify and choose the most appropriate, safe and engaging learning and developmental products for all children."

The report, "Dr. Toy's 100 Best Children's Products for 2004", according to Dr. Toy, is to "encourage focus on the value of play as essential to the learning process." She adds, "The smart play products selected from 100 companies across the U.S., Canada and from other countries provide children with exciting new learning tools that will help them not only to do better in school, but will also provide more constructive activities to do after-school."

Dr. Auerbach believes "parents need help to get a head start locating new, diversified products that children will enjoy using while they increase learning skills, enhance instruction and expand creativity." The products are balanced from among large and small companies and range from low to high tech for "hours of constructive, educational, and stimulating fun."

"Children learn best through play," says Dr. Auerbach, "and these smart toys encourage children to maximize their potential." adds Dr. Toy, "This is a perfect time," She says, "to 'take stock' and do an inventory of what your child is playing with, what is not used and what they need next in their process."

"Dr. Toy's 100 Best Products" were carefully chosen from among hundreds she has reviewed at toy fairs, catalogs, and through many other sources, and by using extensive criteria she developed over many years. In addition to the "100 Best Products," Dr. Toy has created eight special award categories for products suitable for babies to older children including products ranging from handicrafts to hi-tech, priced from \$5.00 to \$100.

These products are affordable, well designed, and reflect the wide range of children's interests. Examples of the special awards include: Ten Best Toys, Best Active Products, Audio and Video Tapes, Creative Products, Educational Products, Games, Socially Responsible Products, and Software/CD's/High Tech Products. Winning products are

manufactured by small and large companies, including: Action Products, Alex, B. Dazzle, Battat, b.dazzle, Big Boing Toys, Binney & Smith, Briarpatch, Comfy, Educational Insights, Fisher-Price, Folkmanis, Funrise Toys, Gamewright, Goldberger Dolls, HABA, Hasbro, International Playthings, Kimbo, Klutz, Learning Curve, Learning Resources, LEGO Systems, Made by Hands, Mamas & Papas, MegaBlocs, Mic-O-Mic Americas, MGA Entertainment, Microsoft Game Studios, Ohio Art, Playmates, Playmobil, Schoenhut, Scholastic, Small World Toys, Spinmaster, Toys R Us/Home Depot, V-Tech, Wow Wee, Zapf Creation, Zen Baby, and many others.

Dr. Toy's annual report includes company customer service numbers, web site URL, age range, price, and a full description of each product. The award-winning, on-line magazine Dr. Toy's Guide features full color photos of each product, links to companies to learn more, interviews with and articles by Dr. Toy, plus hundreds of "Best Classic" and "Best Vacation" products. Over 3000 products are included plus links direct to companies, toy stores on line, and much more.

Dr. Auerbach, a long time resident of San Francisco, originally from New York City, lived in Washington, DC while working for the Department of Education where she approved the first proposal for "Sesame Street," established the first day care center for the children of federal employees. In San Francisco she established the first "hands-on" toy museum visited by over 50,000 children. She is the only Ph.D. with extensive training, background, and over 30 years of experience evaluating, writing and speaking about toys and children's products.

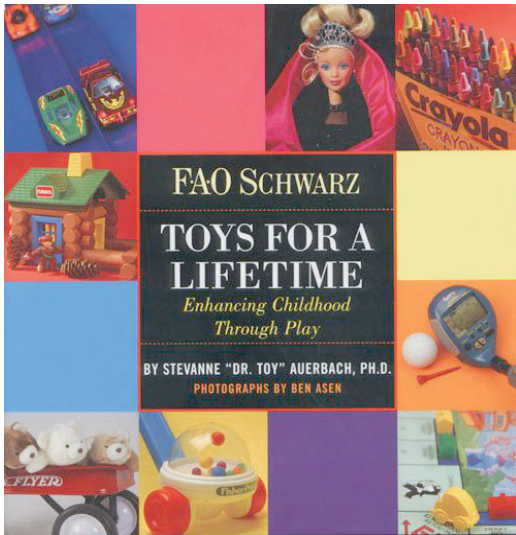
Dr. Auerbach is trained in education, child psychology, child development, and special education. She is a parent educator, consultant, parent and grandparent.

Dr. Toy's Guide ([drtoy.com](http://drtoy.com)) links many related useful sites and resources. Dr. Toy has appeared in the media in the United States, Canada and around the world. **For more information, write Dr. Toy, 268 Bush Street, San Francisco, CA 94104.**



# INVITATION TO PLAY

## Books to Guide Search For The Right Toy



### TOYS FOR A LIFETIME:

#### Enhancing Childhood Through Play

by Stevanne Auerbach, PhD. (Dr. Toy)  
Photographs by Ben Asen

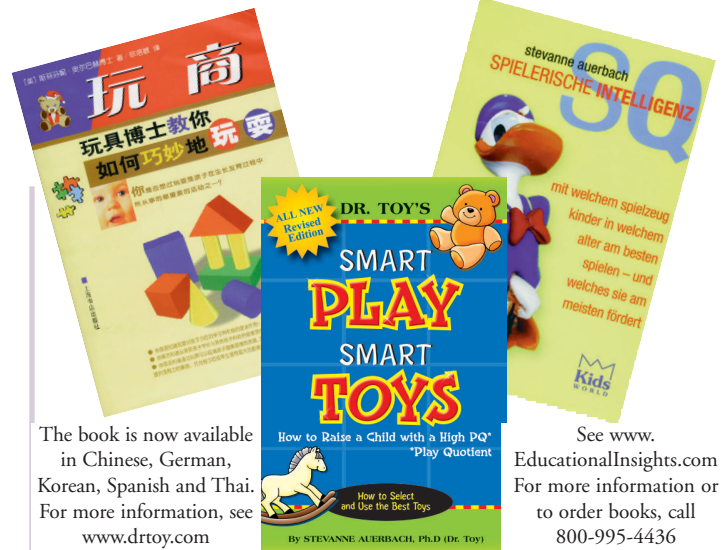
144 pages • size: 8" x 8" • 100 color illustrations  
Hardcover: ISBN # 0-7893-0355-8 \$25.00

Published by Rizzoli/Universe/FAO Schwarz-a Byron Preiss book. This beautiful and unique book presents a lively look at the toys we grew up with and a practical tool for parents interesting in selecting the best toys for their children. In addition to colorful short stores of great toys, acclaimed author Dr. Toy describes how each plaything helps children develop social and academic skills and how parents can support their child's developmental play needs.

"Great info on many of my favorite toys, and beautifully photographed."  
The Ultimate Toy Gift Book



DrToy.com for information



The book is now available in Chinese, German, Korean, Spanish and Thai. For more information, see [www.drtoy.com](http://www.drtoy.com)

ALL NEW Revised Edition  
**DR. TOY'S SMART PLAY SMART TOYS**  
How to Raise a Child with a High PQ™  
"Play Quotient"  
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By STEVANNE AUERBACH, PH.D. (Dr. Toy)

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Dr. Toy provides practical ideas to enhance play-time, for all children from baby to older children.

- Dr. Stevanne Auerbach really understands children, play and

Michael B. Rothenberg, M.D.  
• Auerbach applies her scientific, but not preachy expertise to that challenge. She relies as much on common sense and parenting insight as on scholarly

stimulate, and activate children.  
Kathryn Carpenter Booklist, American Library Association

- **Dr. Toy's Smart Play Smart Toys** is a great guide for anyone searching for the right toy for creative play, building developmental skills or for just plain fun. It's easy to use and well organized. Invaluable!

Alice Bergman West Side Kids (ASTRA member), N.Y. C.



toys. This book is a wonderful resource for parents, teachers and everyone who works and plays with children...

research to suggest toys ranging from brooms and plastic cups to books and watercolors to amuse,



**"Toys+Play = Smart Kids"**