



Toys by category from age 6

TOY REPORT 2011

Arts & Crafts

★★★★
6 +



COLOR EXPLOSION 3-D
CRAYOLA CANADA
740390

This set gives colouring an added dimension! Kids must pick a page of black paper and start tracing on it with the included marker or one of the two colour explosion slick sticks. These will gradually reveal colours hidden on the page, and once everything is uncovered, children can put on the included 3-D glasses and enjoy the scenes as they practically leap off the page! Children enjoy watching the pictures emerge, and with 18 pages in the notebook, there are plenty of pictures to uncover. The markers tend to run out quickly, and the slick sticks are somewhat messy, but kids enjoy the 3-D effect.

★★★★
6 +



COLOR EXPLOSION GLOW DOME
CRAYOLA CANADA
044030

It's just like a light show – at home! Children use the included glow markers to draw pictures on the inside and outside of the dome; when they are done, they can turn on the dome and watch their creations explode into life as the pictures rotate and glow with light. Images can be created freehand, or from the included templates, and with two different drawing surfaces, three light settings, and a variable-speed rotating dome, children can achieve a wide range of effects. The dome cleans easily, and it includes everything that is initially needed; there are even more stencil designs available on-line for free download. The designs are most visible in a darkened room. NOTE: Three AA batteries required.

★★★★
6 +



COLOR-FILLZ DISNEY CARS
CRAYOLA CANADA
233323

Children attach a frame, which depicts characters from the Cars or Toy Story 3 movies, to the colour guide and then apply the Model Magic coloured clay to the frames. After it has hardened, the result is a colourful mosaic picture! This craft is foolproof, and the kits include ample amounts of clay. Children enjoy creating the mosaics, and even though there is only one craft per package, the finished product is very rewarding for them. Some children may need help filling the holes in the frames. In addition, little crafters may prefer to exercise their imaginations by filling the frames with colours that are not on the colour guide.

★★★★
6 +



COLOR-FILLZ DISNEY FAIRIES
CRAYOLA CANADA
233251

With a handy mosaic frame that snaps together and an easy-to-follow picture guide, this craft makes creating and displaying fairy art simple. Children must align the guide under the mosaic frame and mush the matching colour of modeling clay into holes. When every hole is filled, the picture guide is peeled back – and voila! The result is a perfectly-patterned mosaic picture with bright colours. This activity is easy for children to complete independently. The stained glass look of the finished craft appeals to children, who are proud to display the art around the house. NOTE: The modeling clay shrinks and may crack as it dries.




★★★★
6 +



COLOR-FILLZ LARGE FISH
CRAYOLA CANADA
234034

This activity is like an aquarium that kids make themselves! Children must place the fold-out frame on top of the colour guide, secure it in place, and press the model magic clay into the gaps. When the clay dries, the result will be a beautiful, colourful fish. Children can follow the colour guide or they can create their own colour scheme using the eight included colours of model magic clay. The final product looks just like the picture on the packaging, and the instructions are clear and easy to follow. There is minimal fuss in making the craft, and there is even clay left over when it is complete.

Arts & Crafts

<p>★★★★</p> <p>6 +</p> 	<p>COLOR-FILLZ UNICORN/PEGASUS & DRAKE/BLAZE CRAYOLA CANADA 2333220000</p>	<p>A fantastic craft that is easy to do! Children must place the included clay into the frames provided and let it dry; the result are colourful pictures that look great! Depending on the kit purchased, kids can make a unicorn and Pegasus, or two cool dragons. The clay (which comes in red, yellow, blue, and white) mixes easily to produce different colours, allowing children to fill the frame with whatever colours they can imagine. The clay itself has no smell and is easy to clean up, making it a great craft with minimal mess. Each package contains two frames and two guides that highlight the different areas where clay can be placed, and children love the fantasy themes.</p>
<p>★★★★</p> <p>6 +</p> 	<p>FINGERPRINT FABULOUS KLUTZ INC. ISBN-978-1-59174-2</p>	<p>It's okay to use your fingers! This activity book inspires children to use ink pads to make fingerprints on paper, and then use the included marker, glue and glitter to turn those fingerprints into people, animals and other exciting things. The workbook offers a lot of ideas for kids to reproduce, all with clear illustrations and instructions. All of the necessary supplies are included; the ink pads are large enough to last for some time. The colours are vivid and best of all – the ink cleans off of little fingers easily.</p>
<p>★★★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>GLOW EXPLOSION CRAYOLA CANADA 741617</p>	<p>This marker and paper kit comes with a glow activator that makes the children's work of art glow in the dark. The set comes with five markers and 20 special glow sheets of paper, as well as the glow-activating marker. Some young artists may be disappointed by the thick marker tips and by the glow, which fades after about 30 minutes rather than four hours as promoted. Still, children like seeing the glow effect, and the kit comes with enough paper to share with siblings and friends.</p>
<p>★★★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>PAPERONI DELUXE STUDIO SPIN MASTER 20019992</p>	<p>This craft allows kids to create colourful art projects out of paper rolls. The durable, safe paper cutter snips different lengths of the rolls so kids can create a 2D mouse and a 3D lion. Kids really enjoy using the paper cutter and organizing the cut rolls into piles or rows. When different ages play together, older children help younger children with their crafts.</p>
<p>★★★★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>PIXOS ULTIMATE DESIGN STATION SPIN MASTER 7898875427</p>	<p>PixOs are tiny beads that shoot out of a dispenser, grabbed by a suction tool and placed in the grid-like base. Kids are able to make cool 2D and 3D creations that they can be proud of. Once the design is complete, kids spray it with water and dry it with a bendable hose fan. The resulting colourful creations are attractive and durable. This is a quiet activity that kids can enjoy on their own and with friends. Clear instructions. NOTE: Two AA batteries required.</p>
<p>★★★★</p> <p>6 - 11 yrs</p> 	<p>UP IN THE TREES - CHALK MARKERS DJECO DJ08750</p>	<p>Draw a parrot, a butterfly, a peacock, and a lizard using brightly coloured chalk markers! This innovative colour-by-numbers set comes in a lovely gift box and includes six chalk markers, four backgrounds, four templates, and four transparent plastic sheets to draw on. Children must press down on the long-lasting markers to activate a liquid flow that dries to a chalky finish. Once completed, the masterpieces can be saved or the transparent sheets can be wiped clean and started again. A nice, quiet craft that kids enjoy on their own and with friends.</p>



Bath, Sand & Water



6 +



SUPER SOAKER SHOT BLAST

HASBRO CANADA
INC.
69787901

Get soaked! Kids love filling up this water gun, pumping it up and shooting water up to 7.6 metres. The soaker is easy to pump, and it also has an adjustable, removable shoulder stock so that children (and adults) of different sizes can use it comfortably. With a big water tank, children don't need to be constantly refilling the soaker, although it is easily filled via tap, pool or lake. The water cap is attached to the gun, so kids won't lose it.

Computer Software, & Games



6 - 12 yrs

COIN SAVER
EKOMINI INC.
EKOIMB001O

This hard plastic bank combines traditional saving with 21st century technology. As children insert coins into the bank, it reads them; that information can then be uploaded via the included USB cable (and a computer) to the Ekomini website, which will track the running balance of what is in the bank. The website also offers Ekomini-ville, a small virtual town that offers tips and educational adventures that can improve a child's knowledge of financial matters, geography, and math. Unfortunately, while some of the information is beneficial, much of it seems to lack a clear connection to the purpose of the bank. Also, children find the website's game to be difficult and time-consuming, lacking both instructions and adequate time for them to provide answers to the questions. Finally, the bank itself does not always read the coins as they were inserted, leading the on-line calculations of the savings to be incorrect, while bills are not recognized at all and have to be entered into the on-line total by hand. NOTE: Three AAA batteries and Internet access required.

Construction Toys



6 +

DRAGON'S UNIVERSE (MINI) FALCON,STALLION/EAGLE (12PC)

MEGA BLOKS INC.
95229/95230

This building toy allows kids to construct a dragon-fighting speeder from pieces that come in its own transportation pod. The set comes with one warrior and one vehicle. Children find the hands on the warriors difficult to manipulate, so it isn't always easy to get the warriors on their speeders. Once they are on, they tend to fall off early in play. The speeders can be difficult to put together, and pieces can come apart during play. Still, kids like the theme.



6 +



DRAGON'S UNIVERSE (MINI), FLESHTEAR/SKULLCRUSH/IR ONCLAW (12PC)

MEGA BLOKS INC.
95226/95227/95228

Build a dragon from pieces that come from its very own egg! This toy comes with clear assembly instructions, but children had no trouble building their dragons intuitively. The dragons are sturdy, well-detailed and come in a good variety of colours. Younger children may need assistance putting the pieces in place. The parts stay together well and, along with the eggs, the dragons are used in all kinds of imaginative play.



6 +



DRAGON'S UNIVERSE, CLAWRIPPER/BLACKHEART/T AILSPIKE/TORCHWING (24PC)

MEGA BLOKS INC.
95202/95203/95204/9
5205

This large dragon comes to earth in pieces, stored safely in its very own egg! Children must build the dragon and send him off on wild dragon adventures. Kids develop fine motor skills as they build the dragon, and they like its bright colours and the glowy marble in the dragon's chest. The toy comes with a gun that fits on the dragon's back and shoots missiles. Younger children may lack the strength needed to put the pieces together and may need adult assistance. Once assembled, the pieces stay together well, even during rough play.

Construction Toys



6 - 9 yrs



ECOKIT TYRANOSAURUS

BIOVIVA EDITIONS

569169266000

A tyrannosaurus with a twist -- this 3-D puzzle can be built in two possible stances! Manufactured by an eco-friendly company, the thick, durable double-sided pieces are made from recycled materials. Families enjoy building the dinosaur together and then reading the information included on the T-Rex. Once complete, children can display it or take it apart and start again! Note: Directions for assembly are somewhat ambiguous and younger children may need parental assistance.



6 +

IRON MAN 2 HALL OF ARMOR

MEGA BLOKS INC.

1959

This 170-piece building set allows children to build the top secret Hall of Armor, Tony Stark's top-secret storage and repair area from the Iron Man 2 movie. Meticulously detailed, the playset features a multi-directional repair arm and two suits of armor (the Mark II and VI) which, through the use of the included three-foot-long fly wire, can be made to look as if they are flying. There is also a lever-activated trap door at the top of the hall that will send the hero's enemies plunging to their doom. Everything is well-detailed and the assembly instructions are clear, but the pieces are not separated according to purpose, which can cause confusion during assembly, and they do not always fit together smoothly. The final product is fairly unstable as pieces do not always stay together. Still, with three characters and lots of play options, this set stimulates imaginative play, particularly for fans of Iron Man 2.



6 - 9 yrs



IRON MAN 2 TRI-ARMOR SUITCASE

MEGA BLOKS INC.

29675

Suit up! Dress (and re-dress) Iron Man in three different, interchangeable suits of armour. The armour, which comes in 46 magnetic pieces, stores inside a suitcase that is replica of the one that appears in the film. The pieces stick on to the six-inch tall metal skeleton, and they are completely interchangeable, allowing children to customize Iron Man's armour! The toy looks just like the suits from the movie, and the magnetic pieces are easy to use.



6 +

IRON MAN 2 WHIPLASH SHOWDOWN

MEGA BLOKS INC.

1980

Children can build Iron Man's motorized car and the large robotic suit of his enemy, Ivan Vanko. The set also includes the figures of Iron Man and Vanko to use in the finished vehicles. The motorized car runs very smoothly and is easy to use, and the walker has a torpedo launcher. With 172 pieces, there is plenty of building for interested children. The instructions are complex, and younger children will require parental assistance to understand the design concepts (although they can perform the actual assembly themselves).

Dolls, Houses, & Accessories



6 - 8 yrs

KAITLYN/ALIESHA/ADDISON/ OELLE BEST FRIENDS CLUB INK

MGA
ENTERTAINMENT
398141/398158/39813
4/

This a series of poseable dolls that come with trendy clothes and brushable, realistic-looking hair. Each doll comes with a diary written from her point of view, and children can add their own stories to it. The clothing is of high quality and is easy to put on and take off, although children pine for more outfits. While the dolls are cute, the associated on-line activity zone is of poor quality with ineffective technical support available to assist parents.

Dolls, Houses, & Accessories



6 - 7 yrs

MELROSE OR ARIZONA OR TRISTEN MOXIE TEEN

MGA
ENTERTAINMENT
500247/500254/50026
1

These girls have moxie! Fashionably-dressed, these dolls look like pretty teenagers, with real eyelashes and lots of accessories, and if children have more than one doll (or their friend has one), the dolls also have interchangeable wigs. The design is trendy and age appropriate, and the dolls are completely poseable. Children can even access the associated website for additional games and material; the extra material requires an email address to use and is of limited interest to kids, who prefer the dolls.

Educational Toys



6 +



NOUNSENSE

THE CHILDREN'S
CORNER INC.
9492263062

Tickle your funny bone while learning about grammar! In this game, kids choose a story card that has 12 empty spaces that they need to fill with silly nouns. Kids enjoyed making the craziest stories they could and reading them out loud to their friends – with hilarious results! Younger children can pick out their words using the matching pictures and older children can help them read their stories at the end. NounSense is fun to play both with friends and alone, and it's a great way for kids to practise their reading skills and exercise their creativity. Silly noun stickers are made of a resilient plastic that, when the “stick” wears down, can be made sticky again simply by cleaning with warm soapy water. Good variety of nouns (72) and story cards (10) keep things interesting for kids. A co-operative game that's fun for fun's sake.

Games



6 +



4-WAY COUNT DOWN

CADACO
2660800241

A counting game with a clever twist! Each player has ten numbered pegs in front of them, each numbered between one and 10. They then take turns rolling the dice and adding, subtracting, multiplying, or dividing the result to produce a number between one and 10. The corresponding wooden peg is flipped down, and the first player to flip all of their pegs over wins! Simple, compact, and portable, this game involves a clever mix of strategy, luck, and mathematical skill that allows players of varying ages to play. The rules are clear and the game itself is excellent practice for math skills. Sturdy wooden pieces.

Not Recommended

BACKSEAT BINGO

REEVE AND JONES
LLC
2669600016

This game, designed to be played in the car, aims to amuse children with two specially-designed bingo cards with little plastic windows. The cards have additional games printed on them so there different options for play. Made of thin cardboard, the cards are prone to tearing or falling apart in humid conditions. Furthermore, the little plastic windows that have to be flipped during the course of the bingo game are difficult to move, frequently getting stuck or falling out of the card altogether. None of the sets survived the testing period without damage. Not recommended.



6 +






GUESS WHO?


HASBRO CANADA
INC.
C05801

An old favourite just got better! Kids must place a sheet with different faces on it into the game board and select a character; next, players take turns trying to guess each other's character by asking a series of “yes” or “no” questions. In addition to the familiar characters, there are now an extra sheet of pets included, and more sheets (such as kooky creatures or sports) are available to be downloaded and printed. The doors that hide the characters are easy to open and each card is different, making it impossible to guess an opponent's character by looking at personal selections. Children love guessing and seeing the funny characters, and the game builds communication skills and deductive reasoning.


Games

<p>★ 6 +</p>	<p>HYPER DASH EXTREME WILD PLANET 46017</p>	<p>In this game of speed, players race to complete the game's instructions as quickly as possible. The game comes with a tagger (base), which vaguely resembles a DustBuster, and six multi-coloured numbered barbells (tags/targets). The base calls out instructions and players need to tag the appropriate barbells as fast as they can. To "tag" the barbells, players press (or bang) the base down on them (one at a time) to get the barbell into the opening of the base. The base registers which one has been picked up and then spits the barbell out of another opening. Four games are programmed in the base, including Hyper Dash Extreme, Quick Dash (tag the targets in order over and over), Mathema-Dash (solve the sum, difference, or product to choose the right target), and Freestyle Dash (tag as many targets as you can in any order). The game is quite loud (both the volume and the banging), however, and it has no volume control or automatic shut-off. The base did not work reliably, as the targets would not always register, causing frustration. NOTE: Three AA batteries required.</p>
<p>★★★★ 6 +</p>  	<p>SORRY REVENGE CARD GAME HASBRO CANADA INC.</p>	<p>All the fun of the traditional board game, but using cards! In order to win, players must flip over all four of their "pawn cards"; to do that, they take turns playing cards and trying to reach a total of 21 (based on face value of each card) without going "bust." Players who reach 21 get to flip over one of their pawn cards, but if they bust, everyone else flips over a pawn card, and action cards add an extra twist by allowing players to thwart their opponents. The game, which is for two to four players, is fast and furious, and comes with clear instructions and a bilingual summary card that lets players keep the rules handy. The cards themselves are easy to read, and the game is an excellent way for children to improve their math skills. It even works well in the car!</p>
<p>★★★★ 6 +</p> 	<p>TOY STORY 3 OPERATION (BUZZ LIGHTYEAR) HASBRO CANADA INC. C16786</p>	<p>A new theme for an old favourite! Operate on Buzz Lightyear as he suffers from a variety of space-themed ailments; successfully remove the illness and receive money, but if you slip up, a laser sound will play. Kids like the Toy Story theme, and younger children are able to play the game without adult supervision. For kids who like Operation (and Toy Story), however, this game is fun to play. NOTE: Four AAA batteries required.</p>
<p>Not Recommended</p>	<p>TUMBLIN' TREE IMAGIPLAY 90101</p>	<p>In this game, children take turns growing a tree by adding leaves and branches to the trunk. The player who makes the precarious tree tumble must pick up the pieces and start over, and the first player to use all of his or her pieces wins. However, the tree topples too easily, and children lose patience with the game. Children are also frustrated because they cannot make the leaves stay on the branches; the holes in the trunk are too shallow. The toy is flimsy and the quality of wood is questionable – the leaves split easily and the paint chips easily. Not recommended.</p>
<p>★★★ 6 +</p>	<p>TWISTER HOOPLA HASBRO CANADA INC. 16964</p>	<p>In this twist on the classic game, the updated version comes with five different games to play and 16 colourful rings. Players must use the rings and spinners to play games involving tossing, racing and more. The spinners are not intuitive for all players, and adult assistance is needed to figure out how to play the different games. Older children find some of the activities silly, so house rules may enhance play.</p>



Games

<p>★★★ 6 +</p>	<p>U-BUILD CONNECT 4 HASBRO CANADA INC. C-3252A</p>	<p>Kids can build and play an updated version of the old classic, Connect 4, with this set. Players assemble the board from the included construction pieces before they play; the game itself, which resembles the Price is Right game "Plinko," involves a player dropping a marker down the playing surface while his or her opponent attempts to block and redirect the piece using a pair of bumper arms that resemble the paddles in a pinball game. The first player to build four pieces in a row (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) wins. Children who like construction toys enjoy this game, and boys seem to be very interested in the game itself. Others, however, found the assembly to be tiring, and the game itself lacks the strategic element of the original Connect 4.</p>
<p>★★★★ 6 +</p> 	<p>U-BUILD SORRY! HASBRO CANADA INC. C-3252A</p>	<p>This game offers a new twist on an old classic. Based on the Sorry! game of "sweet revenge," this new version adds interlocking bricks to create a maze that players race through in their quest to be the first to get all of their pawns home. Along the way, kids must bust down walls and build new ones to block opponents, or use the "claw" pawn-grabber to send opponents back to start. Players have the option of following the instructions to build the board path or creating their own. Building a new board path encourages creativity and strategy development. NOTE: The claw feature is difficult to assemble and sometimes difficult to use.</p>


Imaginative Play

<p>★★★★ 6 +</p> 	<p>AIR HOGS TITAN GLIDER SPIN MASTER 20028182</p>	<p>***Best Bet Award 2011*** With a 1.2-metre wing span, this large foam plane looks impressive and, just as importantly, is lots of fun! Stick on the decals, snap the wings in place, adjust the tail and kids are ready to go. It can glide up to 50 metres one moment and perform loops the next, simply by flipping the tail. It is surprisingly durable; the wings are designed to release on impact, reducing the damage of landing. Although the foam dents easily, that seldom affects the aerodynamics of the glider and it can easily be patched with tape. Up up and away!</p>
<p>★★★ 6 +</p>	<p>BUMBLEBEE TRACK SET HASBRO CANADA INC. 19931</p>	<p>With this Transformers-themed race set, kids must place Bumblebee in the Optimus Prime launcher and fire him down the track; if he hits Megatron with enough force, the Decepticon leader will explode! The track includes a Bumblebee vehicle, the launcher, track and Megatron figure, and kids like the link to the Transformers franchise. They also like the fast action and being able to launch Bumblebee at Megatron, but children have problems making the toy function as intended. The launcher does not always fire as it should, either misfiring or not providing Bumblebee with enough momentum. As a result, the car cannot navigate the loop successfully, or have the necessary speed to smash Megatron.</p>
<p>★ 6 +</p>	<p>LEGEND OF NARA BUGS MGA ENTERTAINMENT 501213/501220/50123 7/</p>	<p>These toys are supposed to be giant bugs that fight for power on a volcanic planet. Kids turn the on the realistic-looking bug toy to make it vibrate and use the attached string to steer it against its opponents. Children can also log on to the Legend of Nara website to activate the bug for on-line play. The setting may inspire children to imagine battles between giant bugs, but the toys themselves are rather limited in what they do. Rather than actually fight, they only vibrate against each other; they can also be difficult to steer. Interest quickly wears off for most children. NOTE: One 1.5v LR44 battery required (included).</p>

Imaginative Play

<p>★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>LEGEND OF NARA BUGS BATTLE PACK (2-PK) MGA ENTERTAINMENT 501411/591428/50143 5</p>	<p>This toy features a two-pack of toy battle bugs. Kids are attracted to these vibrating giant bug toys and want to use the attached string to steer it against its opponents. Children can also log on to the Legend of Nara website to activate the bug for on-line play. The setting may inspire children to imagine battles between giant bugs, but the toys themselves are rather limited in what they do. Rather than actually fight, they vibrate against each other, and they can also be difficult to steer. Interest in this play quickly wears off for most children. NOTE: One 1.5v LR44 battery required (included).</p>
<p>★★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>LIE DETECTOR KIT (SPY GEAR) WILD PLANET 70320</p>	<p>Kids are encouraged to test friends and family with this portable lie detector. Children can put the suspect's finger in the finger sensor and watch the led lights; the more lights that appear, the higher the likelihood that the suspect is lying. The kit comes in a sturdy plastic case and includes a roll of paper that children can turn or mark. It also includes a book that provides tips on detecting lies from body language and facial expressions. While the toy is unlikely to see extended use in a single play session, the test itself is surprisingly accurate. NOTE: 2 AA batteries required.</p>
<p>★★★★</p> <p>6 +</p> 	<p>LPSO STARTER PACK HASBRO CANADA INC. 21497</p>	<p>Let this little pet help unlock the secret on-line world of the Littlest Pet Shop! Kids must use the pet's secret key code to unlock an on-line community where children can design virtual pets, play games, and chat with friends. The pets in the starter packs are different than the familiar Littlest Pet Shop pets, and the website continues the appealing visuals of the toys with effective animation and video. It also encourages reading and age appropriate computer skills, although it may be too difficult for younger children. NOTE: Membership to the site lasts only for 30 days; creating the necessary on-line profile and using some of the website's functions requires parental assistance.</p>
<p>★★★★</p> <p>6 +</p> 	<p>PIGGY PAINT (2 POLISH & REMOVER) STORTZ & ASSOCIATES</p>	<p>Biodegradable and odour-free, this is non-toxic nail polish that is both environmentally friendly and great looking. The water-based polish dries quickly and smoothly, while still producing vibrant colours. The polish remover, which is alcohol-based, is also non-toxic and has not been tested on animals. The lack of harsh chemicals, however, does mean that the polish remover takes more work than other products to be effective, and its alcohol base can make nails dry.</p>
<p>★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>SPIDER-MAN WEB BLASTER WITH MASK HASBRO CANADA INC. C-2822A</p>	<p>Children are eager to strap this toy's web-launcher to their forearms, load the plastic web, press the launch button with their middle finger and watch the web fly. This set also includes a mask that can be to dress up like Spider-Man, and children love the fact that the motion used to launch the web is the same as that used by Spidey in the movies and cartoons. Unfortunately, the launcher may be too long for the forearms of some smaller children, meaning that they can not wear it as intended. Because it is also very difficult to load, adult assistance is required. This slows down play significantly and frustrates parents.</p>

Imaginative Play

<p>★★★★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>SPINNING ELECTRONIC LIGHTSABER HASBRO CANADA INC. C-2822A</p>  <p>Energizer</p>	<p>***Children's Choice Award 2011*** Use the Force! This life-like electronic lightsaber, based on the one that General Grievous uses in The Clone Wars, appeals to Star Wars fans and more. This double-bladed lightsaber has a special handle in between the "blades" that lets children spin it like a pro. The lightsaber can be configured into two separate sabers or a single spinning saber. The sabers snap together (and apart) easily, and the blades light up automatically when they are spun or connected. Realistic sounds accompany the lights and movement, which make this lightsaber great for individual or interactive play. NOTE: Six AAA batteries required.</p>
<p>Not Recommended</p>	<p>SPY DECOY LISTENER (SPY GEAR) WILD PLANET 70318</p>	<p>Advertised as a secret listening device that enables spies in disguise to overhear faraway conversations, the "listening" function of toy regrettably does not perform adequately. Children who are excited by the idea of a decoy listening device become frustrated by the toy's inability to function properly, promptly losing interest. In addition, the cell phone looks dated.</p>
<p>★★★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>THE ULTIMATE JOKES ON YOU! 12 PRANK KIT REEVE AND JONES LLC 3669699926</p>	<p>Ranging from X-ray spectacles and a squirt ring, to novelty teeth and a hand buzzer, the pranks in this set will appeal to little jokesters (and some older ones, too). The kit works well at encouraging interaction and socialization, and the easy-to-follow instructions encourage children to be independent in their pursuit of pranks. However, some of the items do not withstand extended play. This set is best suited to children who are devoted pranksters.</p>
<p>★★★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>TREASURE TRACKER POOF-SLINKY 7154717000</p>	<p>Kids enjoy going treasure hunting with this realistic-looking metal detector. This toy hovers above a surface, and when treasure is found, it beeps like a real metal detector and registers "metal found" on its screen. This toy also pops apart for easy storage. The toy is not sensitive enough to find all metals, however, and does not "find" coins. NOTE: One 9V battery required.</p>

Science & Discovery

<p>★</p> <p>6 +</p>	<p>CLIMATE CUBES POOF-SLINKY 018000</p>	<p>Future meteorologists are eager to measure the wind's direction and speed, as well as temperature and rainfall with these stackable weather cubes. While this educational toy seems interesting at first, the climate cubes do not work as advertised. The cubes are too light and cannot withstand wind, rain or snow. The rain gauge is too shallow, so rain water spills over before being measured. Parents and children both find the accompanying booklet to be dry and unappealing.</p>
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A good choice for a birthday gift, rated at *** and priced under \$25



A good choice for a travel toy, rated at *** and compact



A battery operated toy, rated ***