

*Reddit
Hot Take:*



Professional Playtime

How parents want their children's toys and playtime to prepare their children with real-world skills for the future.



Children's playtime is not just a time for joyful creativity, but to foster real-world skills.

Parents are looking for their next holiday gift to teach their children skills that can help them get a leg-up in the fierce career market.

Implications—

Parents want to foster skills and abilities in their children that can set them up for success later in life. Brands can harness that desire, by providing toys that uncover a diverse array of skills .

01. Highlight & Foster Diverse Skill Sets

The goal is to identify and foster a diverse set of talents or skills amongst children. Go beyond architects, builders, and coders - Are there toys that inspire future botanists, AI scientists, community organizers?

02. Showcase the Possibilities

For doll brands, showcase your main characters in a diverse set of careers. Inspire children to imagine themselves in a wide range of new career possibilities, stoking the fire of their newfound skill sets.

03. It's Not All About the Parents

When it comes to brands winter holiday campaigns, do not forget about the powerful cohort of adults buying for children that are not their own. Expand your targeting and media plans to reach those who many be clueless what to buy their 6 year old niece.



Future Careers

Trend Summary: Parents are looking for toys that can identify and foster diverse skills, in turn setting them up for future career prospects.

Toys are not just for joy, but also a useful tool to identify children's aptitude for skills and future career paths. Those paths can be as diverse as the current workforce, from coder to photographer to plant influencer.

By exposing kids to a vast array of toys that uncover previously hidden talents, loved ones foster a child's passion and confidence in their new-found ability. A happy side effect being they can achieve mastery before they even hit the dreaded job market.

¹The Genius of Play. (2021, August). [New research shows childhood play impacts future career paths](#). The Genius of Play.

²Emarketer, October, 2021.

³Reddit Internal, Global.

87%

Of employed adults said skills they learned as children helped them achieve career success

+33%

Growth in US sales of Explorative toys Q3 2021 vs previous year²

r/Parenting

Please suggest STEM electronic toys for three year old?

My 2.5 year old is absolutely obsessed with electrical stuff, like sockets and plugs and wires and batteries and all manner of devices... He would rather browse the Wikipedia page for sockets / plugs for various countries than watch Paw Patrol.

I'm thrilled that... there are so many more options for toys. I would love to encourage his interest in a safe manner by buying him STEM toys that have to do with electronics. Do you guys have any recommendations?

384 Comments Award Share Save ...

BEST COMMENTS



Sounds just like my kid. The Little Tikes STEM jr. toys are excellent (especially the builder bot and tornado tower). As far as electricity, we bought this Electricity book/kit (made by ScienceWiz).



Future architects, builders, coders incoming...

r/STEM



Gift for a 6 year old budding architect

So we are “STEM” parents (mathematician and chemist) and we have a decided architect on our hands. She creates amazing lego houses, including interiors, and they're physically stable. She does this for fun.

We are looking into toys that can boost this talent, but many of them are rated for ages 8 and above. She's already owning magnitiles and lego. She wants to build. Any suggestions for a 6 year old that go beyond the typical?



I LOVED K'nex at that age (and for years after)! And I'm now an architect lol. They allow similar free-play/design as Legos, as well as step-by-step instructions to build some really cool stuff.



Makedo cardboard construction tools. They are super sturdy, reusable screws and tools to use to build cardboard structures. I absolutely adore these for both individual imaginative play and in a larger group setting.



Toy Comeback

The pandemic - and beyond - left parents and children reliant on screens. Days were filled with 8+ hours of screen time, from zoom school to virtual playdates. To plant their children firmly in the physical world - while simultaneously battling screen addiction - parents returned to physical toys.

On Reddit, conversations surrounding toys for all ages has grown. Adults with children in their lives are looking for the best toy to engage kids during this digital detox.

From: Tablet Play // **To:** Handheld Brain Teasers

1-in-2

US parents with children <11, said their child spent too much time playing video games¹

+59%

Growth in “sensory” toy mentions YoY²

Screen Saturation

Concern over screens lead to the resurgence of toys

+74%

Increase in views to **r/toys** from 2020 to 2021.²

97k

Communities on Reddit discussed toys in 2021²

¹McClain, C. (2022, April 28). [How parents' views of their kids' screen time, social media use changed during COVID-19](#). Pew Research Center.

²Reddit Internal, Global. *1/22-5/22 vs. 1/21-5/21. **2020 vs. 2021. ***2021.



Beyond addiction, necessary developmental skills are at risk

“

The **screen addiction** is rewiring their brains and it was already doing that but the pandemic sped up the process. Their ability to develop coping skills and resilience is stunted. **Apathy** and **distraction** is our biggest enemy.

”



– Redditor via **r/Teachers**



Next: What's Coming

Non-Parent Guidance

The re-ignited interest in physical toys that facilitate diverse interests and skill sets will collide with holiday shopping this winter.

Parents may feel confident in their holiday shopping but those out of touch with the daily whims of children need a bit of help. The many non-parents who buy gifts for their nieces, friend's children, and everyone in between need guidance on what the best kid gifts are. What toy won't get forgotten in the corner come January?

Parents on Reddit create painstakingly researched and hyperlinked recommendation megathreads, saving the day for all the "rich aunties" out there.

¹Quantcast, US, 2022.

²Reddit/Suzy, U.S., 2021 Holiday Traditions & Activities, n=1020, A13-55, Monthly Reddit Users, Feb 2022.

50%

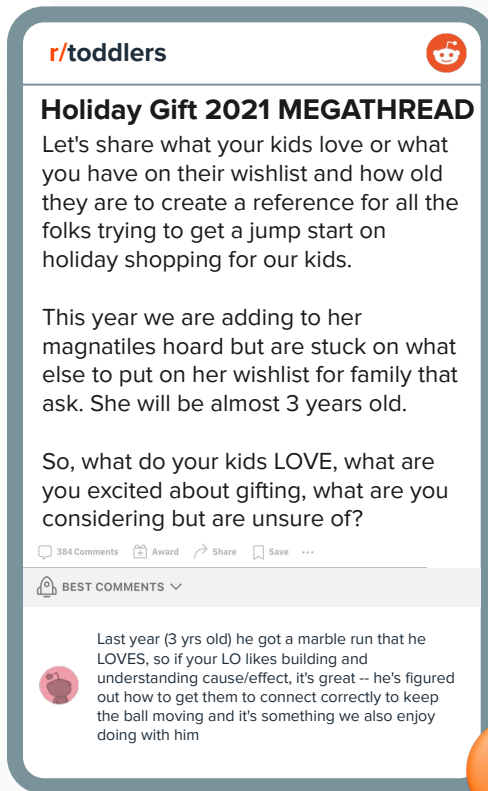
Of redditors in **r/toys** are not parents¹

1-in-2

Of redditors purchased children's toys during the 2021 winter holidays²

1-in-4

redditors who purchased children's toys during the 2021 winter holidays have no children²



Physical toys were all the rage in 2021...

Toys were back in the zeitgeist last winter holiday season, with a vast majority of redditors making toy purchases.

*During the 2021 Winter Holidays

64%

Redditors purchased gifts for their children under the age of 18

4-in-5

Redditors who purchased children's toys made a purchase decision based off Reddit content

28%

Redditors researched or discovered children's toys on Reddit



Thanks!

Want to Learn More?
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