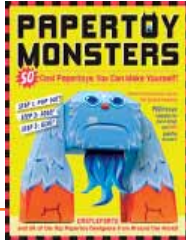


BOREDOM BUSTER AWARDS

14 great toys, books, games
to cure the

Craft Book



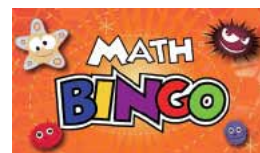
A Monstrously Fun Way to Play

Who better to help bust boredom than a bearded, long-limbed fiend called Icy Huggy? You'll find him and 49 friends — each with a clever backstory — in the riotous activity book *Papertoy Monsters*. Kids pop out, fold, and glue together the title beasts and, should all those eyeballs and fangs inspire, design their own friends using the ten blank templates. **Ages 9 and up.** Workman, \$17 — ALICIA POTTER



APP WE LOVE

Math Bingo is just what it sounds like: kids solve basic arithmetic problems and mark their answers on a bingo grid. **Ages 5 to 8.** ABCYa, \$1 on the App Store.



Updated Classic

**Keep
Your Eye
on the
Ball**

Oglo Color Glo in the Dark balls (soccer, football, playground) do just that — glow in bright colors, not just the ghostly shades of the past. Bonus: The glow lasts several hours. **Ages 4 and up.** *NSI International, \$10 to \$13* — LISA STOWE



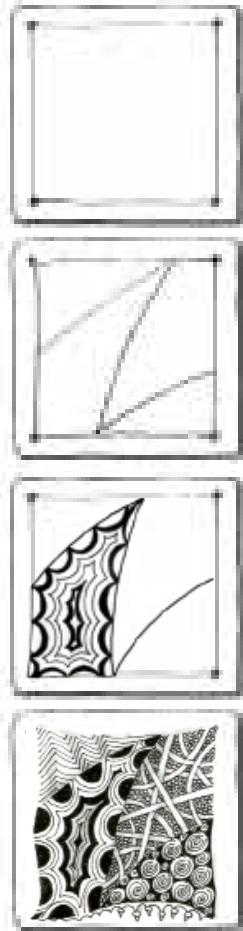
Art Instruction Books

**Doodle
Within the
Lines**

Give your kids the **Zentangle** series of books and watch them turn their doodles into a whole new art form. The technique is simple: start with a shape, such as a square, then mark off sections within the shape and fill in each with an intricate design — either your own or one of the dozens illustrated. The books also offer inspiration for decorating cards, paper dolls, and more.

Ages 5 and up. *Design Originals, \$9 to \$17*

— RUTH SPIRO





Kindness Booster

Deal Others a Good Hand

It's summertime, and the giving is easy, thanks to **Boom Boom!**

Cards: Family Edition. Each deck includes 26 random acts of kindness to perform, such as going out of your way to get something for someone and donating school supplies or clothing to a charity. When the fun's done, tell the tale of your good deed at boomboomcards.com, then pass the card to another family so that they can also perform the act and continue the chain. *Comes with the progress chart shown below.* **Ages 5 and up.** *Boom Boom!*

Revolution, \$15

— BETH HONEYMAN



Learning Game

Ready, Set, Spell

Here's a new brain booster from the makers of the popular Bananagrams game. In **Zip-It**, two players divide the 24 letter-covered dice between them, roll them, and race to be the first to construct a crossword-style grid of words using all their pieces. The winner of each round moves the zipper on her side of the package one marked space. **Ages 7 and up.** *Bananagrams, \$15*

— JORDAN DEFRAK



Creative Coloring

**This Book Really
Draws Kids In**

Inspired by the eye-catching works of pop art icon Romero Britto, **Color Like an Artist** encourages youngsters to transform simple black-and-white drawings with both color-by-number and pattern-creation techniques. The 38-page pad also includes blank pages so that kids can dream up their own masterpieces. **Ages 3 and up.** P'kolino, \$10 — BETH HONEYMAN



Craft Hit

Twist the Day Away

Kids create silly creatures by connecting thick and furry pipe cleaners, aka **Fuzzoodles**, to plastic parts (goofy eyes, shoes, hands). The kits come packed with critter ideas, but our testers loved designing their own fuzzy friends. Available in a variety of kit sizes and themes. **Ages 5 and up.** Giddyup, \$5 to \$25 — JORDAN DEFRAK



Simple Plays

Act Out Your Favorite Fairy Tales

Set the stage for fun with the series **Now I'm Reading! Plays**. Five scripts and four masks accompany each of author Nora Gaydos's adaptations of classic fairy tales, allowing beginning readers to put on a show. Whether Dad gets to "Fee fi fo fum" or Mom blows a stick house down, these clever combos make for a truly entertaining family night. **Ages 5 to 8.** innovativeKids, \$17 each — ALICIA POTTER



Single-Player Game

Win the Rat Race

The rodents in **Lab Mice** need help finding their rewards. Using a wipe-off marker, kids puzzle out a way to connect each colorful mouse to its matching cheese without letting the paths cross. The 50 double-sided game cards start easy and grow more challenging. **Ages 8 and up.** *MindWare, \$17*

— LISA STOWE



Outdoor Toys

Pretend Play Gone Wild!

The 40-inch-tall, easy-to-set-up **Base Camp Shelter** inspired our testers to act out *Animal Planet*-worthy backyard adventures. It also proved to be the perfect hiding place — from squirrels *and* siblings — when covered by the 5- by 8-foot **Camouflage Netting**.* **Ages 3 to 8.** *Summit, \$35 for the shelter; \$15 for the netting*

— ELLEN HARTER WALL



Creative Fun

A Figure of a Different Color

Here's a unique blank slate for kids' creativity: 4-inch-tall, posable, funky white plastic figurines. The **Color Blanks** sets come with permanent markers and stickers so that kids can jump right into the personalization. **Ages 6 and up.** *RoseArt, \$5 to \$10*

— LISA STOWE



TAKE IT FURTHER

* The shelter and netting are part of the **Backyard Safari Outfitters** line of toys. We also like the **Reptile Hunter Super Throw Net**, which adds some energy-burning fun to pretend play adventures. **Ages 3 to 8.** *Summit, \$15*

