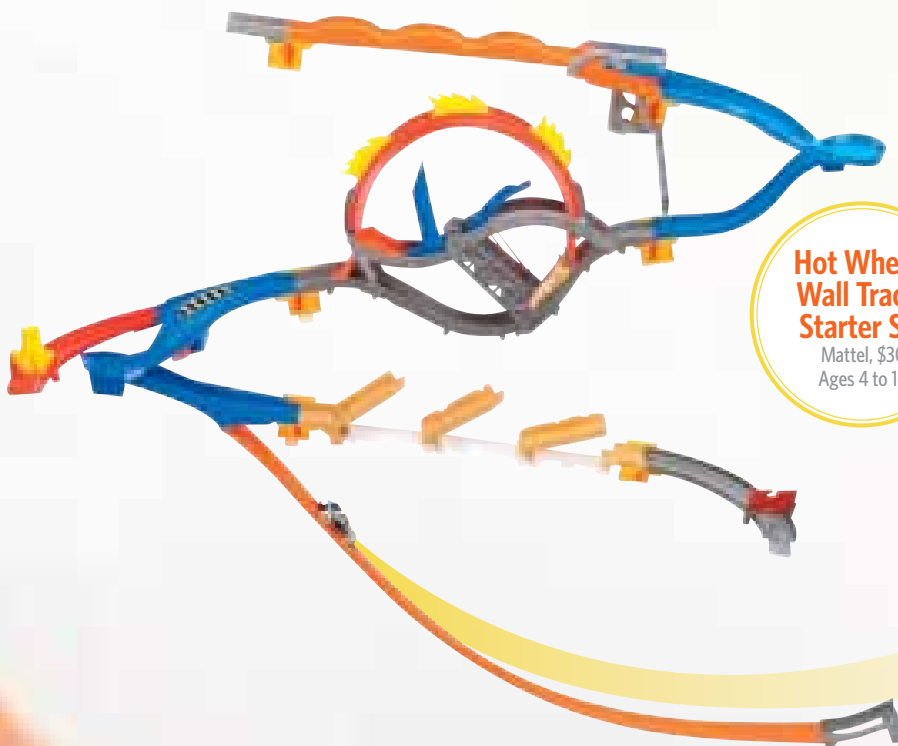




# The Year's Best TOYS

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For 20 years, *FamilyFun* testers have helped select the winners of our annual Toy of the Year (T.O.Y.) Awards. They've picked real standouts — Tickle Me Elmo, Apples to Apples Jr., Groovy Girls, and more. This year they've done it again. Whether you're looking for great family games, super-speedy cars, or creative playsets, these 30 family-tested toys, beginning with our Top 10, are all winners.



1

## Hot Wheels Wall Tracks Starter Set

Mattel, \$30  
Ages 4 to 10

**This gravity-defying set** lifts Hot Wheels tracks to new heights: off the floor and onto the wall! Use the included brackets to hang a course on a vertical surface, then send the car careening through a variety of stunts. Our kid testers loved reconfiguring the obstacles and tracks while tester moms appreciated that the brackets adhere with 3M Command Strips, which don't damage walls and can be easily replaced when the stickiness wears off. *Additional sets available for \$17.*

2



**Meon Deluxe Animation Studio**

Skyrocket Toys, \$35  
Ages 5 and up

Combine simple weaving patterns and flashing light strips, and you get one innovative art set. Kids start by placing one of the six included pictures in the peg-board frame. Then they weave in the plastic light-up strands and push a button to illuminate their creation. Once it's built, kids can sit back and watch their work glow or play games, including a memory light game similar to Simon. Available in *Star Wars*, *Disney Princess*, *Disney Cars*, and other themes.

3



**Perplexus Epic**

PlaSmart, \$30  
Ages 8 and up

**Perplexus Rookie**

\$20  
Ages 4 to 8

These two games of skill turned our testers' world upside down! Rotate each globe 360 degrees to try to move the metal ball through a maze of topsy-turvy tracks and obstacles. The two toys are geared to different skill levels, so kids of all ages can thrill to the addictive single-player games.

4



Not again!

**Alien Mothership 7065**

Lego, \$60  
Ages 8 and up

Attention, Earthlings! All attempts to resist the pull of this building set are futile. When science-fictionados have put the 416 pieces together, they can spin the ship's outer ring to produce spooky UFO sound effects, then extend the arm to abduct the reporter (rumor has it he works for the *Enquirer*).



5

**Whipple Deluxe Pastry Set**

International Playthings, \$35  
Ages 7 and up



With this sweet craft kit, kids can create little confections that look good enough to eat. (But don't do it!) Pipe the Whipple cream onto the 12 bases, including play food, necklaces, and a jewelry box shaped like a cake, then let it harden into treats that never go stale. The creations are so lifelike, kids and younger siblings should be supervised while making them.

**WIN THESE TOYS**

We're giving away some of our Toys of the Year! Like us on Facebook for more details and a chance to win.



6

**BoGo**Razor, \$90  
Ages 6 and up

7

**LeapPad Explorer**LeapFrog, \$100  
Ages 4 to 9

8

**Richard Scarry's Busytown Busy, Busy Airport**Wonder Forge, \$20  
Ages 3 to 7

9

**Pirate Ship**Box Creations, \$40  
Ages 3 to 8

10

**Head Shotz Twin Battle Pack**Silverlit, \$40  
Ages 5 and up

**Thanks to the addition** of a bow-assist spring, the BoGo has a higher, smoother bounce than the pogo sticks we grown-ups had as kids. In fact, one of our kid testers was so impressed with the BoGo's bounce, he presented the toy (and himself) with a homemade award when he reached 200 consecutive jumps. *For riders weighing up to 140 pounds.*

**This durable tablet's features**, such as a built-in camera, video recorder, and touch-screen capabilities, went over big with our young testers and their parents. The kids giggled as they manipulated pictures they had taken in the Photo Lab and loved putting themselves into stories. An art studio app and follow-along e-book are also included. *Additional software sold separately for \$5 to \$25.*

**Lowly Worm, Huckle Cat,** and friends are ready for a vacation. Players take turns rolling the dice, picking up passengers in the airport (cleverly created from the inside of the game box), and flying them to exotic locales placed around the room (yes, that's a beach by your sofa). The goal? To bring back the most souvenirs, of course. *2 to 4 players.*

**Young swashbucklers** will eagerly volunteer to color in — and then crew on — this cardboard ship. Its 32- by 57-inch size means there's room for a captain to steer while a mate or two peek out of the portholes below decks. *Markers and two cardboard swords included. A plank for walking is not.*

**Finally, a toy** that kids are supposed to wreck! This R/C set pits two robots with interchangeable battle arms against each other. To win, kids must play both offense and defense as they make the bots spin, close into a ball, and crash, all in hopes of being the first to knock off the other bot's arms.



See videos of some of the winning toys in action at [FamilyFun.coverleaf.com](http://FamilyFun.coverleaf.com) or on this month's iPad edition (access is included with your subscription).



Autobots, transform!

### Transformers Rescue Bots

Hasbro, \$12  
Ages 3 to 7

**It takes just one easy step**, such as pushing a ladder or twisting an arm, to turn these robots in disguise into sleek vehicles or a flying machine. They're so cool, even big brothers toting Decepticons may ask to play.



### Twist & Drill

Alex, \$33  
Ages 3 to 6



**Pick one of three plastic bits** and place it in the battery-powered drill. Then find the matching chunky nuts and bolts and assemble a cardboard police car, dump truck, school bus, or shipping truck. The drill works in reverse, so the vehicles can be taken apart and built again. So simple, even a parent can do it.

### Play-Doh Twirl 'n Top Pizza Shop

Hasbro, \$17  
Ages 3 to 8

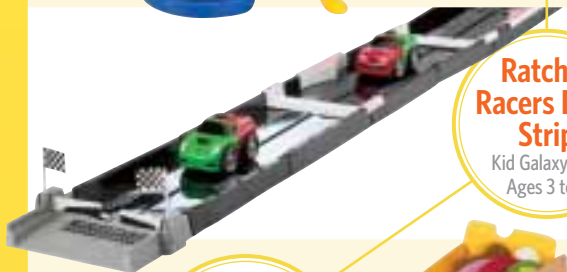
**It's not delivery ... it's Play-Doh!** At this full-service pizzeria, kids can make custom pies using 12 topping molds (peppers, broccoli, olives, even shrimp) and a cheese grater (extra, please).



### Ratchet Racers Drag Strip

Kid Galaxy, \$25  
Ages 3 to 7

**These two clever cars** give kitchen-floor drag racing the green light. Twist the mix-and-match fronts and backs in opposite directions to wind them up. The easy-to-assemble puzzle-piece track includes road bumps, crossovers, and, our testers' favorite, pop-up checkered flags. Boys and girls, start your engines!



### Felt Food Sandwich Set

Melissa & Doug, \$20  
Ages 3 to 8

**With its assortment of felt breads**, meats, cheeses, and veggies, there's something in this 33-piece playset to tempt every palate. Experimental cuisine reigned supreme in our testers' homes, where one kid concoction featured ketchup, mustard, mayo, peanut butter, *and* jelly! Who wants seconds?



### Doctor's Clinic 5695

Lego, \$60  
Ages 3 to 5

**At this clinic**, there's never a co-pay — or a wait. An ambulance with lights and sirens brings patients to the door. The doctor is ready with a stethoscope, an eye chart, and an X-ray machine to diagnose the problem. Mom and baby can sit in the waiting room, ride in a wheelchair, and even get a cast put on and off, and on and off ...



### Where's That Chipmunk?

The Haywire Group, \$25  
Ages 3 to 10

**Our testers found** this simple scavenger hunt game surprisingly addictive. One player selects three clue cards depicting objects found around the house, then hides the plush chipmunk near one of these objects. After seeing the clues, the other players rush to be the first to find the chipmunk. Cards for inside hiding spots (computer, cat dish) and outside (basketball, lawn gnome) can be used separately or together. *2 to 6 players.*





**Disney Animators' Collection**

Disney Store, \$25  
Ages 3 to 10

**When it came time** to design these ten princess dolls, Disney turned to the people who knew the characters best: their animators. The artists created each to look like a toddler version of her movie counterpart. Our young testers loved the unique faces — almost as much as they loved brushing the dolls' hair.



**Hot Wheels Video Racer**

Mattel, \$60  
Ages 5 and up

**Beneath the hood** of this unassuming vehicle lies a super-cool secret: a driver's-eye-view video camera. Aspiring action directors can capture what their car sees as it hurtles down a track. They can also use the car as a camera to film hand-propelled drives or even the view from atop a helmet (thanks to the included strap). The free editing software lets kids add graphics, tunes, and sound to their movies. *Video playback, PC or Mac. Software, PC only.*

**Hoot Owl Hoot!**

Peaceable Kingdom, \$15  
Ages 4 to 10



**This cute cooperative game** offers more than just the opportunity for bad puns when describing it: kids did get a *hoot* out of the game, and there are no questions about *who* wins. Testers truly enjoyed working together to get the baby owls safely back home before the sun rises. *2 to 4 players.*



**Pool with Water Slide 4858**

Playmobil, \$40  
Ages 4 to 10

**It's summer year-round** for this lucky family of six. Their artfully landscaped yard is full of warm-weather accessories — beach chair, umbrella, radio — and the pool can be filled with water. When the family gets too hot, they can use the working shower (just press a pump) or slip and slide their way to a refreshing dip.



**3D Twister**

Silverlit, \$50  
Ages 5 to 12

**Watch your toes** when your kids send this incredibly speedy, 5-inch car flying through the house. With just a little practice, our testers were able to perform a plethora of tricks and jumps from the included ramp. Plus, the Twister can flip over and keep driving, no pit crew needed.



**Glow Book**

Crayola, \$20  
Ages 6 and up

**Draw a series** of pictures on the four clear plastic pages, then bring down the house lights and watch your art shine. A lighting system housed in the book binding illuminates each layer in sequence, making the pages look like animation. When kids are done, they can wipe the pages with a damp cloth and begin again. *Includes six glow markers.*



**Color Stix**

MindWare, \$20  
Ages 5 and up

**Looks can be deceiving** in this seemingly simple color-matching game. Players divvy up the 42 multicolor wooden sticks, then arrange and rearrange them to align as many matching color blocks as possible before timer runs out. *2 to 6 players.*





### Erector Space Chaos

Schylling, \$23  
Ages 7 and up

**According to the backstory** in the accompanying booklet, these new Erector sets are designed for the year 10111 — talk about thinking ahead! Each kit includes tools, building instructions, and more than 75 parts that can be made into a fantastic fighter vessel. *2 sets available.*



### Whoowasit?

Ravensburger, \$30  
Ages 7 and up

**There's not much time** to figure out who stole a magical ring from the king. Players work together, moving through the castle and collecting clues from animals in each room to eliminate suspects. A talking treasure chest guides the game by keeping track of the time, giving voice to the animals, and sometimes revealing a magical fairy who offers helpful hints. *2 to 4 players.*



### Speed Slider

Wild Planet, \$25  
Ages 6 and up



**Soccer coaches and math teachers, rejoice!** This fast-moving game works foot *and* brain skills. Players follow the voice directions of the game unit, kicking one of four buttons marked with a color and a number. Commands for each of the five games get more difficult as kids play, and even include simple math challenges. *1 to 6 players.*



### Snap Fashion Jewelry

SmartLab Toys, \$25  
Ages 6 and up

**With the snap maker**, turn fabric swatches and jewels into fashionable buttons, then take those buttons and make rings, bracelets, necklaces, belts, headbands, and more. When kids use up the 16 included swatches, the kit's book provides inspiration for making more designs from found objects — a new kind of junk jewelry!

### Stomple

Spin Master, \$30  
Ages 8 and up



**Here's a game that lets you feel good** about stomping your opponents. Kids take turns strategizing moves to push marbles through the raised grid. The goal? To leave the other players without any marbles to stomp. *2 to 6 players.*



### Pom-Pom Monster Salon

Klutz, \$17  
Ages 7 and up

**With their wacky styles and neon hair**, these fuzzy yarn monsters would fit in at most high schools. Thankfully, the step-by-step guidebook for creating them is easier to follow than an algebra textbook. Simply wrap yarn around the pom-pom maker, make a few snips, then add accessories, such as googly eyes and punch-out shoes and horns. 😊

## SHOPPING SHORTCUT



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