

Dr. Toy's Best Tech Toy Gift Round-Up

By Stevanne Auerbach, PhD. Dr. Toy®

Dr. Toy selected an excellent array of tech products that offer interactive learning, skill building, and encourage activity. The balance of time spent learning, play and tech is essential for children's maximum development.

According to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation study, American children spend an average of "almost 40 hours a week (equivalent to a full-time job) consuming media outside of school – including television, computers, radio, phones, and electronic games." Most children have TVs, computers, phones, and game consoles readily available. They are exposed to advertising as they browse the Internet, play online games, and watch TV. Parents' responsibilities are more challenging than ever.

Adults must find the right balance in children's activities, and help them to not spend all day being sedentary playing on an app, video game, or other electronic products. We want, for many important health and social reasons, to encourage more active and open ended play for children. Children need a balance of reading books, building with construction toys, playing with board games, puzzles and being out of doors playing with friends, creative activities and following hobbies and interests.

Play is essential for everyone from the one-year-old baby to the one-hundred-year-old senior. How are you creating more varied playtime in your life, with your family?

The selected tech products offer many good choices for tech interaction, learning and great benefits if used wisely.

1. **ClickN KIDS Family Tablet**
3-12 yrs. \$99.00
www.clicknkids.com

The ClickN Kids Family Tablet is the only tablet preloaded with Looney Tunes Phonics. This fully loaded tablet comes out of the box with a matching gel case for superior protection and style. The ClickN Kids tablet is the first of its kind to offer a dual-purpose interface, which means this tablet is designed for both kids and grownups.



2. **Evolve Ozobot**
8-12 yrs. \$49.99
www.ozobot.com

Ozobot offers kids and techies an expressive way to learn and play with robotics in a variety of social and interactive settings. This tiny customizable robot comes to life when you create mazes, tracks, and playgrounds on paper, game boards, and digital screens. Ozobot also comes with free downloadable apps and becomes your physical avatar for one of a kind augmented reality gaming.



3. **Learning Circle Kids Reader Bee & the Story Tree**
3-6 yrs. \$1.99 www.readerbee.com



Reader Bee is a game-changing app that helps children learn to read at the simplest level. Silly stories and characters spark curiosity, keeping children engaged in the fun games. Created by Learning Circle Kids, the app features thirty games that move children from sounds to letters to words. Making learning easier and more intuitive, the app puts children in charge of the learning process and builds the most effective path to fluency. Reader Bee is the perfect starting point for creating confident readers and instilling a love of reading that lasts a lifetime.

4. Paz Toys Webee
1-5 yrs. \$69.00
www.paztoys.com

Webee is a fun, revolutionary educational gaming system based on a web-platform that uses a patented light-weight four key keyboard designed especially for kids ages 1-5. It is designed to grow with the child during the early development years and building the child's confidence through games based on trial and error with lessons that are filled with positive feedback. Its system is also equipped with a sophisticated monitoring interface that is accessible for the child's parents and enables them to follow their child's progress in over twenty different disciplines.



5. Physical Apps TheO™ SmartBall
3-12 yrs. \$39.95 www.physicalapps.com



TheO SmartBall's revolutionary technology has combined physical activity, learning, and fun into one dynamic experience. It combines a sturdy foam ball with dedicated mobile apps to encourage kids and adults to get moving and share interactive personal connections and play experiences. Players toss, bounce, and roll the ball with the smart device safely secured inside. The foam ball protects the device and allows for a variety of movement-based games. To get started simply download one of their fun-filled apps from the iTunes App Store or Google Play and insert your Apple or Android device into the TheO™ SmartBall.

6. Wonder Workshop/Play-I Dash
5-12 yrs. \$169.00 www.play-i.com



Dash is a toy robot who is playful and curious, and loves to explore, go on adventures, and make new friends. But Dash is more than a toy robot, it is a learning and storytelling platform that makes computer programming accessible and fun for young children. It can be programmed to do an unlimited number of things from basic

movement, to object detection, to complex sequences of instruction. Dash is designed to be programmed by children using their touch interface with music, animation, and stories, as well as with existing languages like Scratch and Blockly.

7. Tangible Play Osmo
6-12 yrs. \$99.00
www.playosmo.com

Osmo is a gaming device for the iPad that transforms the physical space in front of the tablet into an interactive environment, and turns any object into a digitally connected game piece in real time. Osmo's three games - Newton, Tangram and Words—bring back the essence of play and encourage creative thinking and social interaction by creating an open environment for kids to problem solve, gain positive feedback, and interact with one another.



8. Kidtellec Tiggly Shapes
18 mos-4 yrs. \$29.95 www.tiggly.com



Tiggly Shapes, the first iPad learning toy for toddlers, is a set of four geometric shapes designed to interact with learning apps on tablets to create an ideal environment for early childhood education. These soft shapes are easy to grip and manipulate, hence combine the educational benefits of physical play, with the learning potential and engagement of digital tools. The product is designed to help children learn geometry concepts, improve their language skills, and develop their motor skills, spatial thinking, and creativity. The apps come in eight languages and are suitable for all generation iPad/iPad minis. Tiggly Shapes comes with three free apps and a felt-carrying pouch.

9. VTech InnoTab 3S Plus Learning Tablet
3-9 yrs. \$79.99

www.vtechkids.com

InnoTab 3S Plus lets kids learn, create, and connect using a kid-safe Wi-Fi connection to the Internet. Now children can search VTech and parent-approved websites as well as communicate in real time with Premium VTech Kid Connect on their very own tablet.

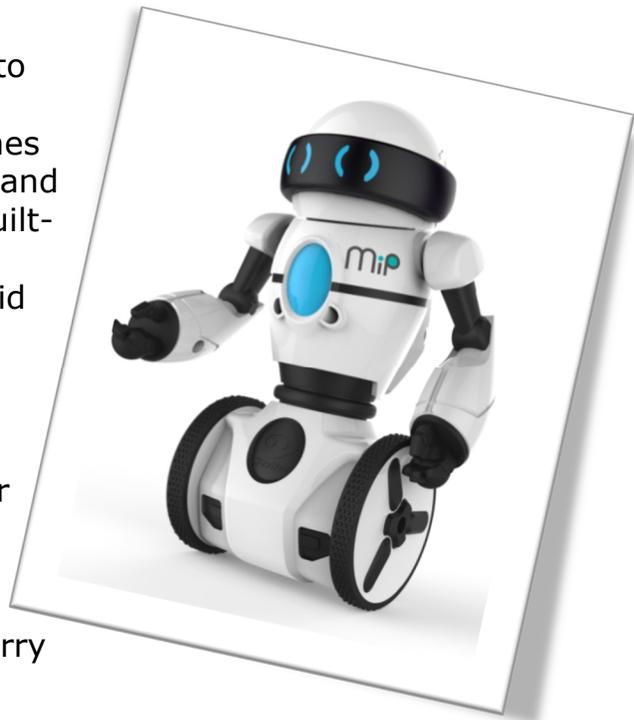
Exchange text and voice messages, photos, drawings, and fun stickers with smart phones using the exclusive app available for free on the App StoreSM and Google Play[™]. In addition to the Rechargeable Power Pack and 16 included apps, children have access to more than 650 additional cartridges, software, and apps that can be downloaded from VTech's Learning Lodge.



10. WowWee MiP
8-12 yrs. \$99.99

www.wowwee.com

MiP is the first consumer robot to balance on two wheels. It has a responsive personality that comes to life through motion, sounds, and LED eyes. In addition to its 7 built-in play modes, kids can also download the free iOS or Android MiP app to any smart device to explore endless means of fun including games, tricks, laser tag, and more. They can even watch MiP dance in sync to their favorite songs while controlling the speed and intensity of its moves. With the included attachable tray, MiP can also carry up to its own weight.





11. LeapFrog Leap TV
3-8 yrs. \$149.99 www.leapfrog.com

With LeapTV active video gaming system kids can learn through motion as they jump, dance, and more. It has a library of 100+ LeapFrog educator-approved game cartridges, game downloads, and videos that get kids into the action while teaching core skills, reading, mathematics, science and problem solving. Games adapt to each child's level—starting with age, automatically adjusting learning for just the right challenge. Comes with camera, console and controller that support three ways to play with system: body motion, classic controller play and pointer play. Has simple, intuitive user interface and use of audio prompts throughout experience to help children navigate games and provide curricular tutorials. System includes: console, motion-sensing camera, camera mount, transforming controller with wrist strap, HDMI cable, 16GB of memory and built-in Wi-Fi for downloads.

12. Leap Frog Leap Band
4-7 yrs. \$39.99
www.leapfrog.com

LeapBand, new wearable activity tracker designed just for children encourages active play and healthy habits through interaction with personalized virtual pet. It gets kids moving and having fun with 50 different activities and challenges, tracking child's physical moves so the more active a child is, the more points they earn with virtual pet. As child earns points through active play, they unlock additional games, challenges, levels of play, and virtual rewards for their on-screen pet. Aspirational fit-band style include a built-in accelerometer, high-resolution color screen, rechargeable battery and water-resistant design. Fun extended to include free downloadable companion app Petathlon™ so kids can



compete as virtual pet in six mini-games like archery, surfing, and bobsledding to win extras including medals and new tracksuits. Can download to LeapPad Ultra, iOS or Android smartphone or tablet. Features parent controls, to set child's device via LeapFrog Connect. In all three modes, LeapBand continues to track child's activity points and display analog watch.

Stevanne Auerbach, PhD/aka Dr. Toy® offers many play, learning, and toy suggestions from baby to older children in the new 4th edition of *Dr. Toy's Smart Play Smart Toys*, available in stores and online Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and Goodreads. The author of three books on toys, she evaluates toys and children's products on Dr. Toy's Guide www.drtoy.com and for Dr. Toy's Best Gift Guide App. You can find more articles by Dr. Toy on The Huffington Post.

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