

## Toy Hall of Fame: 18 months to 3 years



### ImagiBRICKS

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 32, [ImagiPLAY800-882-0217](tel:800-882-0217))

Toddlers on up have delighted in these blocks for more than 50 years. (What's more fun than stacking stuff up and knocking it down?) The large red cardboard originals were joined by medium yellow and small blue blocks along the way. ImagiPLAY, which began selling them in 1998, added a large brick set in four colors. But the update we love most: 2002's drool-resistant coating. (Toy Hall of Fame 2005)

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### Cabbage Patch Kids

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 30, [Cabbage Patch Kids](#))

Who knew the Little People, as they were first known, would get so big? Not creator Xavier Roberts, whose first crop of soft-bodied dolls was sold at craft fairs. Licensee Coleco changed the name in 1982 to reflect a Roberts family story that babies are born in a cabbage patch. By the mid-1980s, the dolls, who came with a birth certificate, adoption papers, and a face only a mother could love, were causing riots in store aisles. Play Along relaunched the popular line this year. (2004)

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### Shape-O Toy

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 22, [Tupperware888-TUP-WARE](tel:888-TUP-WARE))

Tupperware takes great pride in keeping food fresh, but it's also a leader in just-for-fun items. In 1964 the company added this circular shape sorter to its line of storage containers. Once a toddler puts all the stars and circles in their place, the two handles make it a piece of cake for him to empty it out and start all over again. (2003)

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### Sit 'N Spin

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 20, [Playskool800-752-9755](tel:800-752-9755))

Toddlers may be too short to enjoy amusement-park thrillers, but since 1973 they've found plenty of excitement on this pint-size ride. The round seat and "steering" wheel allow them to sit, grab hold, and twirl to their heart's content--or at least until their arms get tired. Today's version features optional lights and songs to add to the dizzying fun.

(2002)

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### Raggedy Ann

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 15, [Applause](#)800-777-6990)

In 1915 Johnny Gruelle cheered up his 13-year-old daughter, who was ill and bedridden, by spinning tales about her favorite rag doll, which he'd found in the attic. After Marcella died that November, he began to sell Raggedy Ann (and, later, a book about her antics) with one addition: a heart sewn into the stuffing. Joined by brother Andy in 1920, the mop top has since appeared on Broadway and on a stamp. (2001)

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### See 'N Say

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 10, [Fisher-Price](#)800-432-5437)

"What does the pig say?" A tiny farmer began asking that question in 1963, and he didn't need batteries to do so until the late 1980s. For years the toy used the same technology as a gramophone's: A pull string activated a record and needle. Some things haven't changed, though--kids still get a kick out of the moos and meows. (2000)

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### Alphabet Blocks

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 30, [Uncle Goose Toys](#), 888-774-2046)

When he couldn't find the classic blocks he'd played with as a child, William Bultman decided to make them himself. Sixteen years later, they still spell fun for kids. Beautiful detailing helps these tower above the rest: Each of the 27 basswood blocks is imprinted with four letters of the alphabet, a number or math symbol (such as a plus sign), and an animal. (1999)

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### Mr. Potato Head

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 7, [Playskool](#)800-752-9755)

The original tater toy, introduced 46 years ago, didn't come with a chunky, plastic body. Until 1964, kids pressed the toy's mix-and-match features into real potatoes. But the spunky spud has come a long way since then: In addition to getting a new body, he's acquired accessories like baseball caps, moustaches, and glasses; starred in the movie Toy

Story; and given more than 50 million children good reason to put on a happy face. (1998)

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### Red Wagon

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 70, [Radio Flyer](#))

This year marks the 80th birthday of the sturdy red wagon, which has sent children all over the world off on grand adventures. Radio Flyer was founded in 1917 in Chicago by Antonio Pasin, an Italian immigrant and cabinetmaker. Though the first of his wagons were crafted in wood, the emerging auto industry and easy access to metal prompted Pasin to switch to steel in 1928. The name he gave his toy was a nod to the spirit of the times: "radio," for that fascinating new invention, and "flyer," to symbolize the marvel of the airplane. (1997)

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### Little People School Bus

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 15, [Fisher-Price](#))

Preschoolers who dream of someday riding the bus to school can occupy themselves in the meantime with this realistic replica. The Little People first climbed aboard this yellow plastic vehicle in 1959. Today, the four culturally diverse students include a disabled child, and the bus is rigged with a wheelchair ramp and a pop-out stop sign. It's elementary: This busy bus has kept imaginations moving for more than 30 years. (1996)

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### Corn Popper

(Suggested Retail Price: \$ 10, [Fisher-Price](#))

What mother or father hasn't vacuumed the house followed by a toddler pushing a Corn Popper? This slice of American life wouldn't have been possible without inventor Ralph Crawford, who had no idea that he would create such a popular toy. Struggling to design a new mechanism to make balls pop up, he became frustrated when the spheres kept flying off the table. Thankfully, his determination prevailed. He covered the contraption with a plastic hood and was rewarded with a popcorn sound. After more than three decades and 20 million sold, this toy hasn't lost its charm. Too bad the impulse to vacuum

disappears once kids get old enough to clean their own room. (1995)

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### Supermaze

It took seven years for the original Supermaze to wind its way from Australia to America, but when it was finally introduced in the United States in 1882, the toy quickly found its way into hospitals, daycare centers, classrooms, and homes across the country. The spiral-like frame was originally created for children with special needs, but its design appeals to all toddlers, especially those who are fascinated with sliding the vibrantly colored wooden beads along the twisting rods. (1994)



### Cobbler's Bench

In the early 1930s, around the time that Norman Rockwell was creating cover art for the Saturday Evening Post, his toy-designer brother, Jerry, was fine-tuning his own classic-to-be, the cobbler's bench. Jerry seemed to know just what toddlers like to do with toys: Pound hard and make noise. Durable and enduring, this sturdy, all-wood bench and hammer have long been a hit. (1993)

## Toys of the Year: 18 months to 3 years



### Dragonstone Castle With Inhabitants

(Suggested Retail Price: \$35, [HABA](#)) You'll admire this soft activity book for its utterly charming looks; your toddler will adore its detail-packed pages, with parts she can squeeze, slide, and pull. But the real adventures begin when you stand the book up to create castle walls. Then the princess, knight, and rattling dragon give your little princess the chance to act out as many royal escapades as she can dream up.

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### Polar Bear Touch & Stack Blocks

(Suggested Retail Price: \$25, [Small World Toys](#))

These 10 chipboard blocks are covered with exquisite illustrations from Eric Carle's book 'Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?' — a classic tie-in for a classic toy. What

makes them extra special are the different textures on each animal, from a zebra's rippling mane to a snake's leathery skin.

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### Sound Puzzle

(Suggested Retail Price: \$30, [Edushape](#))

What a sweet, simple way to teach animal sounds and shapes. When your toddler fits a piece into the matching hole, he'll be rewarded with an authentic (not annoying!) animal noise. If he presses the rooster at the top of the puzzle, he'll hear a jazzy rendition of "Old MacDonald" — and there's an on/off switch (should it start to get really old). The soft pieces can be stored in the puzzle or in the attached pouch, and each one has a string handle perfect for use by little hands.

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### Handle Haul and Ride

(Suggested Retail Price: \$35, [Little Tikes](#))

You can't beat the value of three toys in one! First, it's an oversize dump truck big enough to hold all of a kid's stuff. Release two tabs at the back of the truck bed, flip it over, and then it's a ride-on, complete with a "control panel" that plays real truck sounds. Finally, the steering wheel pulls out so your child can use the toy as a wagon.

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### Wheel Pals Triple Track Tower

(Suggested Retail Price: \$15, [Playskool](#))

Toddlers, start your engines! Place the three cars at the top of the track; push the red button to send them barreling through the finish line, to the sounds of motors revving. Kids'll play again and again to see who wins — there's a different champ each time. When the race is over, the wheels can be "parked" at the back of the play set.

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### **On-the-Go Vehicle Blocks**

(Suggested Retail Price: \$17, [Sassy](#))  
Children who love trains, planes, and auto-mobiles will zoom toward this soft block set. Each one contains a small plastic airplane, train, fire truck, and car or police car (the last two rattle when shaken). And they all fit into a plastic handled case for play on the go.

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### **Wood Creations Farm**

(Suggested Retail Price: \$25, [MegaBloks](#))

The natural-wood and plastic pieces in this simple building set allow toddlers to create a farm from scratch. It comes with adorable animals — a pig, a cow, and more — and pieces that attach to your child's own MegaBloks to extend the play.

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