

# What makes a great Activity Toy

**Wendy** draws on her experience as Argos' Senior Buyer and toy development consultant to give advice on the best activity ranges

**T**o me, the best toys are those that entertain and empower kids to create, learn and share their ideas through hands-on, open-ended play.

The main objective of any activity toy should be to inspire, ignite and maintain endless imagination and encourage self-expression in an exciting way.

Here's the top 10 key ingredients that I think great activity toys have to offer:

**01 Engaging for endless hours of play** The best activity toys appeal to a variety of play patterns (storytelling, building, sculpting and invention). The more engaging the toy is to hold the child's attention over a long period, the greater the chance of other items within the range to be bought, thus enhancing sales and brand loyalty.

**02 Dexterity and creativity are aligned to the child's developmental stage** Too many pieces or a lack of 'how to' guidance can overwhelm a younger child, so the endless possibilities shown on the packaging can inhibit rather than inspire.

A lack of components or creative challenges for an older child means



they'll be bored and unlikely to want other items within the collection.

**03 Grows with the child** Creative toys which progressively develop kids problem-solving skills and enhance their innovative creativity, will in turn raise their confidence, independence and initiative.

**04 Distinct Product Value** Whether it be through low price points, high piece count, good quality or intangible value, giving it that 'must have factor!'

**05 Encourages personalisation** This allows the child to create something unique that reflect their personality and interests as well as the pleasure of gifting for friends and family.

**06 Easy and fun-to-follow instructions** which don't challenge a child's (or mums!) patience are vital to keeping the child engaged. This is especially true if they want to recreate the inspirational, 'wow' models shown on-pack. Lose a kids interest on one pack and you'll lose them on the rest of the range.

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**07 Wow packaging** Obvious I know, but I've seen so many fun, exciting activity toys over the years in packaging that's anything but fun and exciting!

**08 Variety within the range** Once hooked in, many kids are loyal to specific brands and are desperate to collect every item within it. A missed opportunity if your range is too limited.

**09 Activity theme is relevant to the age and interests of kids of today** remember we're in a world where kids are scarily getting older younger by the minute!

**10 Promotions** Drive the all-important spikes at Easter and Half Term and incentivise mums to keep her bottom drawer brimming with activity goodies for rainy days and birthday party gifts.

**Wendy is Director of 'Be Inspired Consulting Ltd' who offer expert business advice on all matters involved in trading with retailers, market knowledge, product development and licensing**  
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